DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 264 SO 007 830

AUTHOR	Hazlett, J. Stephen
TITLE	Conceptions of Democratic Education in the Founding of the French Third Republic (1870-c. 1890). Final Report.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Educational Research and Development (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C. Regional Research Program.
BUREAU NO	BR-1-0627F-FR
PUB DATE	Aug 73
CONTRACT	OEC-6-71-0526(508)
NOTE	90p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$4.20 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Citizenship; Comparative Education; *Democratic Values; *Educational History; Educational Philosophy; *European History; Mass Instruction; Moral Values; Political Power; *Political Socialization; Primary Education; *School Role; Socialization
IDENTIFIERS	*France; Third Republic

ABSTRACT

The broad problem area of the relation of education to democracy, dealing primarily with the thought of the "opportunist" wing of French democracy in the early Third Republic (1870-c. 1890), is the focus of this study. It endeavors to find out why the politicians and educators who contributed to development of the primary school believed that mass education was important to the regime they were working to establish. The investigation relied on published sources, including the speeches and writings of leading republicans, the pedagogical press, school textbooks, monographs, histories of French education, and governmental publications. The major finding is that republicans looked to education to promote order and social control. By propagating a common set of values and ideals and a standard appreciation of the republic, the school was expected to be a powerful agent of public tranquility and the balance wheel of popular sovereignty. In converting social and economic problems into educational problems, republicans effectively denied the need for significant government intervention and placed the responsibility for improvement on the shoulders of the individual. Sources consulted for the three sections, "The Education of the Citizen," "Education and Social Reform," and "Moral Education and Laicism," are listed. (Author/KSM)

ED 097264

Final Report

Project No. 1-0627F
Contract No. OEC-6-71-0526-(508)

CONCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN THE FOUNDING OF THE FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC (1870-c.1890)

J. Stephen Hazlett
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712

August, 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

SP 007 830

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
National Center for Educational Research and Development
(Regional Research Program)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
INTRODUCTION		1
Chapter I.	THE EDUCATION OF THE CITIZEN	13
Chapter II.	EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM	31
Chapter III.	MORAL EDUCATION AND LAICISM	55
CONCLUDING COMMENT		78
SOURCES CONSULTED		81

INTRODUCTION

On September 4, 1870, a group of Parisian deputies from the Corps législatif proclaimed the republic at the Hôtel de Ville and set up a government of national defense. The Empire was over. Napoléon III was a prisoner of the Prussians. Marshal Mac-Mahon's army had capitulated at Sedan. The road to the capital was open to the enemy.

This was the third attempt to establish a republic in France. The First Republic (1792-1804) encompassed the Convention, the Directory, and the Consulate. The Second (1848-1852) extended from the demise of the July Monarchy to the restoration of the Empire.(1) Neither of them was a true republic. In both cases unsettled conditions and the lack of a democratic tradition led to the re-establishment of authoritarian rule.

The outlook for the Third Republic was not bright. Paris may have endorsed the new regime but the rest of the country had not yet expressed its will. By the end of September the Prussians had encircled the capital. Efforts to raise the siege failed. The army of Marshal Bazaine capitulated at Metz in October. Resistance ended in January, 1871, with the signing of an armistice at Versailles.

The election of a National Assembly to decide for peace or war took place on February 8. Republicans and those who wanted to continue the uneven struggle were disappointed. The Assembly was composed, in round numbers, of 400 monarchists (200 legitimists and 200 Orléanists), 100 moderate republicans, and 100 radicals. The majority favored an end to the hostilities. Adolphe Thiers was chosen to be chief of the executive power. A preliminary peace was signed the same month and its terms were ratified

---

(1) The relevant French regimes were: First Republic, Convention, Directory, and Consulate (1792-1804); First Empire (1804-1815); Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830); July Monarchy (1830-1848); Second Republic (1848-1852); Second Empire (1852-1870); Third Republic (1870-1940).

by the Treaty of Frankfurt (May 10, 1871) which marked the official close of the Franco-Prussian War.

Civil war followed that with the Germans. Radical Paris felt betrayed by the peace settlement and the conservative temper of the new government, some of whose actions brought economic hardship to the populace. Aware of the possibility of rebellion, Thiers ordered the army to remove artillery pieces that had been placed in Paris for its defense. Fighting broke out when the attempt to execute this order was made on March 18. Government troops and agents were hastily withdrawn and the city created its own autonomous administration, reviving the term "Commune." In April Paris found itself besieged again, this time by Frenchmen. Government forces finally broke into the capital on May 21. Resistance was put down during what became known as "bloody week." Between 17,000 and 20,000 Parisians died in the suppression of the Commune. Many more were arrested and tried for participation in the revolt. The Commune left wounds that were slow to heal. It intensified suspicions among classes, heightened the clamor for order and stability, retarded social reform, and pushed more than one republican toward the right.

The political question persisted. What kind of government did the nation really want? Since the majority of the Assembly was monarchist, the plan was to bring back the king. But which one? There were two pretenders: the comte de Chambord, grandson of Charles X, represented the Bourbon line; the comte de Paris, grandson of Louis-Philippe, represented the Orléanist branch. More than familial bitterness separated the two. The Orléanists were amenable to parliamentarianism and constitutional monarchy. The Bourbons, or legitimists, wanted to restore as much of the ancien régime as possible. A project was discussed whereby the two lines could be merged, the comte de Chambord reigning first, the comte de Paris succeeding him. But the Bourbon pretender was stubborn and uncompromising. He would not bend his principles which included a refusal to accept the tricolor flag. He asked for more than all but the most die-hard royalists were prepared to give.

Republican fortunes, so bleak in February, 1871, began to improve the next summer. In the by-elections of July 2 republican candidates won 99 out of 114 vacant seats in the Assembly. It appeared that the people had voted in February for peace, not a king. Republicans now claimed that they were the conservatives and that royalist squabbles threatened public tranquility. This line seemed to make an impression. In the 158 partial elections between February,

1871, and September, 1874, republicans were victorious in 126, royalists in 22, and Bonapartists in 10.(2) The wily Thiers came out in support of a republic, albeit a very conservative one.

Monarchists watched their initial advantage slip away. They were able to dislodge Thiers on May 24, 1873, and to replace him with the Catholic, legitimist, Mac-Mahon whose term of office as president was set at seven years. This was a holding operation. Hopefully enough time could be bought in which to smooth the way for the restoration of a king.

Pressure was mounting for an end to the provisional political arrangement, however. A permanent form of government was demanded. The monarchists had been unsuccessful. Bonapartism was still unthinkable for most persons. A radical republic was also impossible. But what about a conservative republic wherein appropriate institutions could check the force of universal suffrage? The Assembly seemed least divided by this alternative.

Compromise was necessary. The right would have to give up the king and the left would have to give up the idea, dear to republicans, of a popularly elected single chamber holding all power. The constitutional laws of 1875 were the result of bargaining led by the center groups. France was a republic. In addition to a Chamber of Deputies elected by universal suffrage, there would be a Senate composed of 225 members elected by special electoral colleges and 75 members named for life. Deputies served four years, elected senators nine. Both houses, sitting together as the National Assembly, elected the president who served for seven years.

Parliamentary republicanism was not part of the democratic tradition. A president and an upper chamber betokened aristocracy and distrust of the people. But Léon Gambetta secured republican support for the constitution on the assumption that a parliamentary republic was better than none at all. The great transaction, a patchwork that pleased few, inaugurated the most durable regime France has had since 1789.

---

(2) Léon Jacques, Les partis politiques sous la III^{e} république (Paris: Société du Receuil Sirey, 1913), p. 140; for a comprehensive discussion of the founding of the republic, see Gabriel Hanotaux, Histoire de la France contemporaine, 1871-1900 (4 vols.; Paris: Combet [vols. 1 and 2] and Société d'Edition contemporaine [vols. 3 and 4], 1903-1908).

Now began competition for control of the new governmental machinery. In the elections of 1876 conservatives captured the Senate and republicans gained a clear majority in the Chamber. President Mac-Mahon was, of course, monarchist. Conflict between him and the Chamber was not long in coming. Mac-Mahon forced the republican premier, Jules Simon, to resign on May 16, 1877, and asked the conservative duc de Broglie to form a government, which the deputies rejected. Following his constitutional prerogative, the president dissolved the Chamber. The country was called upon to choose between the political tendencies at issue. Elections for the new Chamber took place in October and resulted in a republican victory (54 percent of the vote). The May 16 crisis eventuated in the endorsement of republican policies and the strengthening of the legislative vis-à-vis the executive. A government acceptable to the deputies was installed. Never again did a president dissolve the Chamber.

Republicans continued their successes in 1879. They took 66 out of 82 seats in the January senatorial elections. Now they controlled the entire legislature. The presidency fell to them, too. Unable to reconcile himself with the political purge of the administration, including the army, the marshal resigned on January 30. Jules Grévy, a republican, became the new president. Thus early in 1879 republicans took hold of the republic.

Unfortunately they were not united. Different tendencies had appeared during the struggle to prevail. Those in the dominant group were dubbed "opportunists." They were generally moderate, supportive of the constitution, and willing to pace their reforms cautiously so as not to endanger their hard-won political standing. To the left were the radicals: doctrinaire, intolerant of the constitutional compromise, and anxious to make reforms quickly. To the right were recent converts, mainly former Orléanists, who adopted the republic's form, if not its spirit, for lack of a viable alternative. Cooperation was more difficult to achieve in victory than in opposition. Jealousy and bickering over priorities prevented the presentation of a common front. Colonial policy, domestic reform, and constitutional revision divided republicans in the 1880's.

Education was one of the first items to be dealt with by the "republic of the republicans." That the masses must be instructed in a democracy was a point on which all republicans could agree. In the decade 1879-1889 a series of important laws reformed the educational system in accord

with the regime's ideology. Chief among the measures affecting primary schooling were the following:(3)

The law of August 9, 1879, required each département to maintain normal schools for men and women.(4) The first normal school in France was founded in Strasbourg in 1810. The Guizot law of June 28, 1833, enjoined the départements to establish such schools for men. As part of the reaction to the 1848 revolution, the Falloux law of March 15, 1850, made this stipulation optional. Normal schools for women dated from 1838 but there were only 17 of them in 1876. Teacher training for females remained largely in the hands of the church. Hence the 1879 legislation aimed at the preparation of not only more teachers generally but of more lay teachers specifically.

The law of February 27, 1880, reorganized the central and regional administrative and supervisory councils (Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique and conseils académiques). Previous legislation had assigned places on these councils to clerics, magistrates, and representatives of other so-called "great social influences." This law eliminated such representation and confined membership, mostly elected, to educational personnel. Primary schooling had six elected delegates on the Conseil supérieur.

One law of June 16, 1881, required all primary schoolteachers--public and private--to possess state teaching certificates. The Falloux law had recognized certain equivalencies. Members of teaching orders, for example, could give instruction on the basis of their lettres d'obédience. Out of 37,216 teaching sisters in 1879, only 5,733 had the state license. This situation was criticized on pedagogical and political grounds. The 1881 law did away with the equivalencies but its immediate effect was tempered by generous allowances for incumbents with the requisite number of years of prior service.

---

(3) For a discussion of the formulation and passage of the primary school laws, see Maurice Gontard, L'Oeuvre scolaire de la troisième république: l'enseignement primaire en France, 1876 à 1914 (Toulouse: IPN Centre régional de documentation pédagogique, n.d.); the texts of the laws may be found in the Journal officiel de la république française.

(4) A département is an administrative subdivision headed by a prefect. In the time period covered by this study, there were 87 départements, 362 arrondissements, 2863 cantons, and 36,056 communes.

A second law of June 16, 1881, realized a longstanding democratic ambition. It made public primary schooling free. The local community was charged to supply from its revenue the lost tuition funds. The extent of free schooling had been increasing for some time. The fact that some teaching orders, like the Christian Brothers, did not accept payment for their services was an incentive for the state. For the benefit of the poor prior laws and decrees had exempted from paying fees a certain proportion of the school population (commonly one-fourth). As of 1867 municipalities were permitted to establish free schooling for all. Fifty-seven percent of the students attended free schools in the 1876-1877 academic year. From one point of view the 1881 law merely sanctioned a movement already well underway and confirmed the idea that primary education was a basic public service.

The law of March 28, 1882, was doubly important. First, it made education mandatory for children from the age of 6 through 13. Formal education could be obtained in public or private primary schools, the elementary classes of secondary schools, or from parents or tutors. (In the latter two cases student achievement was to be examined yearly by public authorities). This law, too, confirmed practice. Over 85 percent of French children in the specified age range were already attending school. Second, the law secularized the public primary school curriculum. Religious instruction and observances were eliminated from the program. Clerics no longer had the right to inspect schools. The curriculum consisted of civic and moral instruction; reading; writing; elements of the French language and literature; geography and history (primarily French); "some common notions" of law and political economy; elements of the natural, physical, and mathematical sciences and their applications to agriculture, hygiene, and industrial arts; handwork and the use of tools; elements of design, modeling, and music; gymnastics; military exercises for boys; and sewing for girls.

The law of October 30, 1886, has been called the charter of French primary education. It codified and sought to perfect the laws and regulations governing the lower schools. Establishments officially in the primary sector were enumerated: maternal schools, infant classes attached to elementary schools, elementary primary schools, higher primary schools, complementary courses in elementary primary schools, and apprenticeship schools. The status of private schools was described; the right of the state to inspect them to see that they were moral, salubrious, and law-abiding was reaffirmed. School administration and in-

spection received detailed treatment as did the recruitment, classification, and discipline of the teaching force. The law extended the secularization of public education: ecclesiastics were no longer permitted to teach in public primary schools.

Finally, by the law of July 19, 1889, payment of the schoolteachers was taken over by the state. They were now national functionaries. Named to their posts by the prefects, rather than by educational personnel, and recompensed by the central government, the instituteurs and institutrices could be expected to fulfill efficiently and uniformly their mission as the apostles of the republican state.

A few of the individuals who played important roles in the shaping of the republic and its educational system and who will be frequently referred to in this study should be introduced at this point. Jules Ferry (1832-1893) deserves first mention since he was the prime strategist for much of the school legislation and a major statesman in the 1880's. From a bourgeois family in the Lorraine, Ferry came to Paris as a young man to study law. He was attracted to positivism and developed an abiding interest in the problems of mass education. A confirmed republican, he opposed the rule of Napoléon III. In 1869 he was elected to the Corps législatif. After the proclamation of the republic, Ferry joined the government of national defense, holding positions in the Paris administration. After the Commune, he accepted a diplomatic mission to Greece but returned to the National Assembly following the fall of Thiers. In 1875 he was initiated into Freemasonry. Ferry was a prominent figure among the "opportunist" republicans. He served as minister of public instruction three times: February 4, 1879-November 14, 1881; January 30, 1882-August 7, 1882; February 21, 1883-November 20, 1883; and as premier twice: September 23, 1880-November 10, 1881; February 21, 1883-March 30, 1885. His major emphases were the school laws and colonial policy. Strong opposition to the latter forced him out of the premiership in 1885. The following years were a time of trial and unpopularity: he was disillusioned by the support given to General Boulanger, who posed a dictatorial threat to the republic; his candidacy for the presidency was rejected; he was wounded in an assassination attempt in 1887; and he was defeated in the legislative elections of 1889. Two years later, however, he was elected to the Senate and became its president.

Probably no one did more to secure the establishment of the republic than Léon Gambetta (1838-1882). Born in southern France, son of an Italian immigrant who was a

grocer in Cahors, Gambetta, like Ferry, came to Paris to study law, was influenced by positivism, and spoke out against the Empire. He rose to the leadership of the young radical republicans and defended a most advanced program in the 1869 elections. At the time of the government of national defense, he held the portfolios of the interior and of war. On October 7, 1870, Gambetta daringly flew out of besieged Paris in a balloon to go rally the resistance of the provinces. As head of the governmental delegation at Tours, he wielded broad powers. When peace was restored, Gambetta devoted himself to selling the republic to an uncertain France. Through his newspaper, La République française, and his speaking tours, republican propaganda was spread throughout the country. A gifted orator, his message was infective. To get the republic safely founded, he was willing to compromise and to table some far-reaching reforms. Radicalism gave way to opportunism as Gambetta engineered republican acceptance of the 1875 constitution. He was perhaps the most influential member of the Chamber of Deputies in the late 1870's. But prominence bred fear and resentment. Although he was made president of the Chamber in 1879, he failed in his effort to unify the republicans in a coherent, disciplined party and Grévy was reluctant to ask him to form a government. Not until 1881 did Gambetta become premier and his "grand ministry" lasted only a little over two months. He died tragically in 1882 from complications of an accidentally self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) was chief spokesman for the radical republicans. He was born into a Jacobin family in the Vendée in western France. While studying medicine in Paris he participated in republican demonstrations for which at one point he was jailed. In the mid-1860's he visited the United States. Back in Paris in 1870 he was named mayor of Montmartre. In 1875 he headed the Paris municipal council and was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1876. He spoke in behalf of the petite bourgeoisie and workingmen and throughout the 1880's he criticized the "opportunists" for retarding, if not abandoning, republican reforms. After flirting with Boulangism and being indirectly implicated in a scandal involving the financial backing for his paper, La Justice, Clemenceau was defeated in the elections of 1893. He began a new political career with his election in 1902 to the Senate--an institution he had considered incompatible with republicanism. He became premier in 1906 and again during the First World War, after which he retired from politics.

Paul Bert (1833-1886) was a moderate republican from Auxerre who specialized in educational questions and par-

ticipated in the campaign for school reform. After studying law briefly, he turned his attention to physiology in which he distinguished himself and held a professorship at the Sorbonne. Attracted to Gambetta, he entered politics and was first elected to the legislature in 1872. Later, in the Chamber of Deputies, he was the reporter for the commission on education. He was minister of public instruction in the Gambetta government and authored a controversial civic instruction manual. He died while serving as resident-general of Annam and Tonkin.

The individual closest to the workings of the public primary school was Ferdinand Buisson (1841-1932). From a Protestant family, he studied philosophy but did not at first teach in France because he refused to swear allegiance to the Empire. He emigrated to Switzerland in 1866, taught there, and pursued his interests in nondoctrinaire Protestantism and international disarmament. After returning to France in 1870, he joined the primary school administration and served there in several capacities until 1879 when Ferry made him director of primary education in the ministry of public instruction. Buisson held this important post for 17 years. As counselor to transient ministers, he played a major role in the formulation and application of school policy. In 1896 he was appointed to a chair in pedagogy at the Sorbonne. Elected to the legislature in 1902, he was active in the political maneuvers that led to the prohibition of teaching by members of religious orders and to the separation of church and state. In 1927 he shared the Nobel prize for peace with the German pacifist Ludwig Quidde.

Two of Buisson's friends and associates warrant passing mention: Félix Pécaut (1828-1898) and Jules Steeg (1836-1898). Both were at one time Protestant pastors. Pécaut was asked in 1880 to help organize the école normale supérieure for women at Fontenay-aux-Roses. For 15 years he directed the studies at this institution that prepared teachers for the departmental normal schools. Steeg was a journalist, deputy from 1881 to 1889, officer in the educational inspectorate, director of the Musée pédagogique, and successor to Pécaut at Fontenay-aux-Roses. He defended school legislation in the Chamber and his writings on education included textbooks on moral and civic instruction.

Jean Macé (1815-1894) was the founder and animator of the French Ligue de l'enseignement, an organization that did much to popularize the idea of mass education. After his studies at the collège Stanislas, he tried his hand at several occupations and followed republican and socialist ideas. The 1848 revolution was welcomed but Macé was disillusioned

when the people sanctioned the coup d'état of Louis-Napoléon. This experience convinced him of the necessity to educate universal suffrage. For many years he taught at a girls' school located first at Beblenheim and then after the war of 1870-1871 at Monthiers. He made a reputation for himself as the author of schoolbooks. In 1862 he began to organize community libraries in the Haut-Rhin and then in 1866 he launched his appeal for the creation of the league. His idea was to see formed a network of loosely connected local associations devoted to the construction and support of schools and libraries. By 1870 the league had 59 chapters and 17,856 adherents. It worked with republican politicians to drum up enthusiasm for free, compulsory, and lay schooling. Its constitution was formalized in 1881 and Macé was elected first president of the league federation. After passage of the major school laws, the league shifted its attention to such things as making sure the laws were obeyed, stressing adult education, and promoting vocational education and physical and military instruction. Macé was named senator-for-life in 1883.

This study pertains to the broad problem area of the relation of education to democracy. That popular instruction is vital to the maintenance of a society of free men who participate by right in the direction of their government has become a truism that is regularly invoked. But repetition is not explanation. Why must popular sovereignty be educated? What kind of instruction is required? The commonplace that education is necessary to prepare the voter to make the best use of his suffrage only begs the question and the argument that dwells on literacy, though perhaps valid, does not suffice to account for the nature and scope of the educational enterprises that have been undertaken in the name of democracy.

Two models might help establish alternative frames of reference. In both the ideals of popular sovereignty and certain natural rights possessed by all citizens are defining characteristics of democracy. But the similarity ends here. The first model limits its objectives to the realization of the ideals just mentioned and the implementation of a suitable governmental structure that is designed to reflect and execute the will of the majority. The freedom of the people to do as they see fit as individuals is maximized; the legal constraints on their activities are kept at a minimum. Within this perspective education tends to be emphasized as an individual benefit. It develops the talents and skills of the individual for his own use; permits him to more profitably pursue his interests and enjoy his rights; and in equipping him to do more things for him-

self, it reduces his reliance on government and other persons for the satisfaction of his needs and wants. Learning thus protects individuality and enhances autonomy and self-direction. Many of those persons today who are considered radical educational reformers draw their inspiration from this view of democratic education.

The second model basically differs from the first insofar as it presupposes the existence of some standard, however vague, to which the exercise of popular sovereignty and civic rights should adhere. Democracy here becomes a particular "way of life" as well as a political process; the decisions the people make are as important as their right to make them. Pursuing personal interests comes second to fulfilling democratic values. In this model the focus of education tends to be social in that it centers on preparing the young to act in accord with the value pattern the society, or the dominant portion thereof, wishes to preserve and to transmit. To the degree that it seeks to regulate rather than to expand independence and freedom, learning serves as an instrument of social control. From this point of view education usually is made synonymous with schooling, preferably state schooling, because all children must receive the appropriate instruction and the government assumes that it can best guarantee the inculcation of the desired values. As a preliminary point of orientation, it may be argued that the conceptions to be reviewed come closer to this second model than to the first.

This work deals primarily with the thought of the "opportunist" wing of French democracy in the early Third Republic (1870-c.1890). It does not attempt to trace the intellectual antecedents of this thought, nor does it describe in detail the passage of the school laws or the structure of the educational system. Rather it seeks to explicate the ideas on democratic education of some of the politicians and educators who contributed to the development of primary schooling. Thus it endeavors to find out why these men believed mass education was important to the regime they were working to establish. The first part of the study treats political education, the second pertains to education and social reform, and the third discusses moral education and the notion of <u>laïcité</u>.

The investigation relied on published sources. Of basic interest were the speeches and writings of leading republicans. School textbooks and the pedagogical press were surveyed. Also consulted were specialized monographs on relevant topics, standard general histories and histories of French education, biographies, and governmental publica-

tions. A complete listing of the sources consulted in the preparation of this report can be found in the bibliography. Interpretative comments are given in each chapter and are summarized in the conclusion section.

Chapter I

THE EDUCATION OF THE CITIZEN

Government based on the will of the people expressed through universal suffrage was the keystone of the French republican creed. Whatever their differences on other matters, French republicans had long agreed that popular sovereignty was the fundamental doctrine around which they could rally.(1) Jules Ferry's statement on universal suffrage in his La lutte électorale en 1863 was characteristic of the fervor with which republicans contemplated the shaping of national policy by the popular will. Universal suffrage was "a sacred and sovereign institution, . . . the honor of the multitudes, the security of the underprivileged, the reconciliation of the classes, and the legal life for all. From now on in it alone one must live, hope, and believe."(2)

But if they held that popular sovereignty was the only legitimate basis for political life, they were nevertheless wary of its operation. It is not overstating the case to say that they feared the practice of this principle which they ostensibly valued most. The behavior of the voters during the Second Republic and the Second Empire did not bode well for the success of a republic. Universal suffrage had been decreed in March, 1848, but it did not lead to the establishment of the democratic and social republic. In the elections for a National Assembly in April, 1848, the voters had returned to power a large majority of "notables" who had little sympathy with the notion of popular democracy.(3) What was more shocking to ardent republicans was the fact that the electorate had overwhelmingly endorsed Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état of December 2, 1851,

---

(1) Paul Bastid, Doctrines et institutions politiques de la séconde république (2 vols.; Paris: Hachette, 1945), I, 42-43.

(2) Paul Robiquet, ed., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry (7 vols.; Paris: Armand Colin, 1893-1898), I, 92.

(3) Frederick A. de Luna, The French Republic Under Cavaignac, 1848 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 100-118.

which was the prelude to the restoration of the Empire the following year.

From these experiences with universal suffrage the republicans drew an important, if painful, lesson: the conferral of a right counted for little unless accompanied by some assurance that the right would be wisely used. Popular sovereignty's value as a political ideal could not be dissociated from the directions it might take when put into practice. Jean Macé, the founder of the French Ligue de l'enseignement, never forgot nor quite forgave the people's approval of authoritarian government under Napoléon III. In no uncertain terms he accused the French citizen of misusing his sovereignty. "Remember all the iniquities that you allowed to be committed in your name," he wrote in 1873, "and that you, yourself, accepted with a light heart. Remember all that and quit accusing the traitors you see everywhere in the hour of your reverses. It's you who are the first traitor, you who, in order to sleep tranquilly, gave up the country, without a thought, to your saviors of December 2."(4)

How could these aberrations be explained and what could be done to protect against them? Was republicanism in France destined to follow a cycle which began with outpourings of democratic sentiment in times of crisis and which ended with the popular inauguration of some strongman? Republican leaders faced a dilemma in dealing with these questions. On the one hand, they rejected the claims that the Frenchman preferred monarchy or caesarism and that he was incapable of self-government. These ideas contradicted the very foundation of republicanism and the ideals of the Great Revolution of 1789. No genuine republican could accept them. On the other hand, they also rejected the idea that a republican government could legitimately suppress, ignore, or coerce the expression of the people's will. Such a republic "from the top down" was a sham and was incompatible with popular sovereignty in a society of free and equal citizens. The analysis of past failures was not thus permitted to shake the conviction that the people did want the republic and that they could govern themselves.

For men like Léon Gambetta and Jules Ferry political history and republican doctrine were not irreconcilable. The latter was not just a romantic vision when viewed from

---

(4) Jean Macé, Les idées de Jean-François, Vol. 7: Jacques Bonhomme a ses députés (Paris: Librairie Franklin, 1873), pp. 38-39.

the perspective of the former. The explanation of the past and the hope for the future were actually the two sides of the same coin. The cause of previous errors was ignorance and the remedy for them was therefore education. This conceptualization had clear advantages. It accounted for the country's political experience without necessarily ascribing to the populace either a predisposition to authoritarianism or an insurmountable incapacity to control its own conduct. Through their ignorance, which was purposely maintained by the enemies of the revolution, the masses had been tricked, duped, and led astray of their own best interests. It further implied that the will of the people could be a dependable basis on which to build a stable and enduring republican regime and that this could be accomplished without violating the sovereign rights of the free citizen. Education seemed to be the essence of good politics.

The link between education and popular rule was solidly formed in the early years of the republic. Gambetta contributed much to this effort. In a speech given at Bordeaux in June of 1871, he told his audience, made up of members of the republican committees of the Gironde, that the necessity of the moment was nothing less than the remaking of the country.(5) France lay prostrate, the victim of misrule, Prussian aggression, and civil war. The cause of all the wrongs was ignorance, "from which despotism and demagoguery successively arise." To combat this evil, "of all the remedies that recommend themselves to men in politics, there is one which dominates and sums up the rest, and that is the education of all." Gambetta was not confining himself to purely political concerns here. He went on to find ignorance at the heart of social unrest and the recent military debacle. Concerning the latter he drew a conclusion that attests more to his enthusiasm for education than to his ability as a military analyst: "We were beaten by adversaries that had put foresight, discipline, and science on their side, which proves, in the last analysis, that even in conflicts of material force, it is intelligence that wins the day."(6)

---

(5) Joseph Reinach, ed., Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta (11 vols.; Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881-1885), II, 15-34.

(6) The statement was made that the Prussian schoolmaster was responsible for the victory of 1870-1871. French republicans frequently used this argument to gain support for public education, as Gambetta is doing here. With good sense, Macé debunked this view, pointing out that a "perfectly ignorant poacher is assuredly more formidable, gun in

The nuances and emphases differed from time to time and from place to place among individual republicans, but the theme of the argument remained the same: the sovereign people could not function in behalf of the country's welfare without education. For Macé, universal suffrage in the absence of universal education led the voters to "perdition."(7) The experience of the Second Republic convinced him that self-rule by an ignorant citizenry was nothing more than a dangerous trap.(8) The positivist Littré affirmed that universal suffrage reflected the historical context.(9) Given the appropriate circumstances, monarchists and Bonapartists were understandably the beneficiaries of the electorate's favors. Gambetta agreed that this was true. He admitted that the conservatives of 1848 were more successful than their republican opponents because they better comprehended how universal suffrage could serve their ends.(10)

There were some who contemplated the spectacle of an unlearned sovereign mass with outright fear and revulsion. To M. A. Mézières, who authored one of the little textbooks on morality and civics that was used in the public schools, nothing could be more dangerous than the ignorant mob.(11) One of Gambetta's faithful lieutenants and journalist collaborators, Eugène Spuller, did little to hide, in his later and more conservative years, his feelings of anxiety and contempt. In the preface to the second volume of his Figures disparues(12) he wrote:

---

hand, than a well-read person who has not yet made the acquaintance of gunpowder." (Macé, Les idées de Jean-François, Vol. 2: La demi-instruction (Paris: Emmanuel Vauchez, 1872), pp. 53-54.

(7) Jean Macé, Allocution de M. Jean Macé à la séance solennelle de clôture du premier congrès de la Ligue au palais du Trocadéro, le 21 avril 1881, appendix in A. Dessoye, Jean Macé et la fondation de la Ligue de l'enseignement (Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1883), p. 246.

(8) Gabriel Compayré, Jean Macé et l'instruction obligatoire (Paris: Paul Delaplane, 1902), p. 17.

(9) Emile Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république (Paris: Aux bureaux de la Philosophie positive, 1880), pp. 453-454.

(10) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, I, 252.

(11) M. A. Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique (Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1883), p. 153.

(12) Eugène Spuller, Figures disparues (3 vols., 3rd ed.; Paris: Félix Alcan, 1894), II, viii.

> In modern states, constituted as republics, the masses reign and govern: they are sovereign, and these masses are all ready, alas!, to let themselves become intoxicated with their all powerfulness. Imagine what their tyranny would become if public reason were not there to moralize and contain them! The world would have seen nothing like it, neither more dreadful nor more degrading, since the time of the Roman Caesars. The tyrant, instead of the one of a single man, would have millions of heads and for that would be only more senseless and its yoke only more debasing. Fortify public reason in order to find elements to resist the caprices of the masses: such is the first duty and first interest of men of liberty and civilization. And how do you fortify public reason if it is not by first educating individuals and then the [political] parties?

Although he was more optimistic than Spuller, Gambetta, himself, avowed that the flood of universal suffrage needed to be channeled and diked. He believed this even prior to the crumbling of the Empire. At a banquet, attended by many students, in April, 1870, he praised universal suffrage and posited an identity of sentiment and interest between the masses and the youthful intellectual elite. Nevertheless, he told his listeners, "we must address ourselves to universal suffrage, we must guide it and enlighten it; each one of us, in the measure of his forces, must devote himself unceasingly to the ministry of universal suffrage."(13) Seven years later he was still arguing that their concern for social and political "defense" animated the republicans' efforts to spread education and instruction.(14)

Thus the compelling needs to transform a mass of subjects into free citizens worthy of the republic and to promote the order and stability which were believed to be the preconditions of prosperity and progress accorded popular education a central position in republican thought. It was both a goal in its own right and a strategy for attaining other desired aims. It promised to liberate yet also to moderate. It could fulfill the revolutionary dreams of 1789 yet avoid resort to revolutionary violence. But the mere assignment of education to a prominent role in the making of a regime founded on popular sovereignty resolved very little. It only defined an approach for dealing with certain

---

(13) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, I, 253.
(14) Ibid., VI, 271.

problems. Moreover, it gave rise to numerous questions about the nature of man and the educational process.

One of the bases on which French republicans fastened their faith in education was man's rationality. Man was a reasoning being. It was this characteristic that set man apart from other forms of life and seemed to confirm the possibility of a well-ordered society of sober citizens patiently seeking the common good in the conduct of their own affairs. The fact that the people had made mistakes in the past and had, on occasion, given themselves over to excesses did not negate this conception of the rational man and the rational state. The term rational man did not mean that an individual came into the world fully functioning as a reasoning creature; rather, it signified that he had the capability to become one through proper nurture. From the republican point of view, kings and emperors were responsible for much of the Frenchman's political irrationality because they had ruled him by suppression and subjugation and had purposely kept him in ignorance.

Developing rationality thus became an important educational objective. Compayré claimed that teaching people how to think was the goal of Macé's career.(15) Macé certainly did stress the necessity for the public to be able to think things out and make reasonable political decisions. The unthinking, untutored voter was for him "a zero, a blind force, at the mercy of every ambition and falsehood." The disastrous Mexican adventure and military intervention in the Roman question were examples of the blunders a people who did not think could allow to happen.(16)

In a time when "so many passions and utopias appeal to vain dreams," Ferry counseled teachers on the importance of helping students learn to reason so that they could see the "realities" of their situation.(17) Gambetta referred to universal suffrage as "the power enlightened by reason" and he maintained that the principles of justice and reason were defining characteristics of the revolution.(18) In 1883 Louis Liard, who was then the rector of the academy of Caen and who later was to be instrumental in the reform of higher education, explained, in a solid republican manner, the role

---

(15) Compayré, Jean Macé et l'instruction obligatoire, p. 51.
(16) Macé, La demi-instruction, pp. 54-60.
(17) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VII, 398-399.
(18) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, II, 21.

reason played in striking a balance between freedom and constraint:(19)

> Man . . . is a free and reasonable being; as a free being, he can do what he wants; as a reasonable being, he must do what his reason and conscience command him to do. He is thus, at the same time, his own master and the subject of his reason and conscience.

Though he feared the ignorant mob, Mézières blessed an enlightened democracy which would necessarily be "sensitive to reason, good sense, and equity."(20) And as late as 1934, one could find Léaud and Glay simply stating, in their work on the French primary school, that reason is the basis of one's right to participate in public life.(21)

These citations do more than document the republican concern with reason. They also point to two underlying assumptions about how reason would work: one was that people would reason from shared givens and the other was that reasoning from shared givens would lead to predictable conclusions. Without these assumptions the stress placed on the development of public reason makes little sense. What was hoped for was that the masses and their republican government would be kept in a union of kindred minds that had been freely arrived at through reason.

Therefore the chief mission of the school was to communicate to the young the fundamental givens of the new regime and to do as much as possible to mould the student's behavior within the new political framework. For Paul Bert the education of the citizen, or civic instruction, alone was sufficient to both necessitate and justify compulsory and state education.(22) And in his famous circular of November 17, 1883, to the schoolteachers, Ferry conveyed the same idea stating that the law of March 28, 1882, affirmed the will of the country to found a national edu-

---

(19) Louis Liard, Morale et enseignement civique (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1883), p. 178.

(20) Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, p. 153.

(21) Alexis Léaud and Emile Glay, L'Ecole primaire en France (2 vols.; La Cité française, 1934), II, 132.

(22) Léon Dubreuil, Paul Bert (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1935), p. 216; Discours de Paul Bert au banquet offert par les instituteurs de France, 18 septembre 1881 (Paris: C. Murat, n.d.), p. 27.

cation and to found it on those notions of duty and right that were among the "first truths" of which no one was permitted to be ignorant.(23)

Some historians have considered patriotism as the heart of civic instruction.(24) But love of country was not a republican monopoly; therefore devotion to France did not necessarily mean loyalty to the regime. The schools certainly stressed patriotism, but the education of citizens involved more than this. Civic instruction also sought to posit a new republican mythology, to inculcate a clear understanding of the citizen's rights and duties, and to create proper respect for the state. In a word civic instruction was conservatively inspired insofar as it aimed at fashioning patient, obedient citizens whose political thoughts and actions were kept within the republican framework and whose freedom was exercised primarily to do what was expected of them.

Republican educators attempted through their schoolbooks and public pronouncements to create an historical and valuational perspective that tied together in a distinctive manner France, the republic, and the revolution of 1789. The revolution was portrayed as the beginning of the modern era; it was the watershed separating centuries of benighted enslavement from the reign of enlightened citizenship. The ideals of the revolution, the principles of 1789, were the indisputable bases of modern French society.(25) To be sure certain revolutionaries had been guilty of some excesses but these paled into insignificance when compared to the evils of the ancien régime.(26) All told the revolution was beneficent, and its role in history was incontestable. Men could no longer seriously dispute its meaning. One of the major achievements of the 1875 constitution in the eyes of

---

(23) Jules Ferry, Circulaire adressée par M. le Ministre de l'instruction publique aux instituteurs, concernant l'enseignement moral et civique, November 17, 1883, reproduced in Revue pédagogique, December 15, 1883, pp. 535-543.

(24) See, for example, Carlton J. Hayes, France, A Nation of Patriots (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), pp. 35-63, and Mona Ozouf, L'Ecole, l'église et la république, 1871-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), pp. 122-126.

(25) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 312.

(26) Paul Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école (Paris: Picard-Bernheim, 1882), pp. 161-162.

Gambetta was that from then on all Frenchmen, without exception, owed respect and obedience to the principles and ideas of 1789.(27) Ferry believed that differing attitudes toward the revolution lay at the heart of the division between the "two Frances"(28) and one admitted reason for his scathing attacks on the Jesuits was their refusal to accept or even defer to republican myths about the revolution.(29)

The republic was not only the best form of government for French democracy it was the agent of the revolution as well. Its mission was to propagate and realize the revolutionary ideals.(30) Hence the republic was not just a political form; it had its own content, its own spirit, which it sought to convey. To be a true republican meant that one was a child of the revolution and vice versa. The three republics to date were manifestations of the same spirit and each had bestowed a particular blessing on the people.(31)

The next link in the chain was that which coupled France and the republic. Gambetta was especially skillful in forging this link. A persistent theme in his public addresses was that France and the republic were indissolubly and definitively tied together.(32) He seemed to want to make the two terms synonymous by trying to convince his listeners that whatever the country needed or wanted could best be obtained by the republic.(33) Paul Bert went so far with this idea as to argue that the fatherland was defined not by language, geography, or ethnicity but by "the free and mutual consent of men who want to live under a political and social regime that they have freely created or adopted."(34)

---

(27) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, IV, 307-308.
(28) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 125-126.
(29) Ibid., III, 57-58, 101.
(30) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, III, 373-374; IV, 307-308; Spuller, Figures disparues, III, xxiv-xxv.
(31) Paul Bert, Leçons, discours et conférences (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881), p. 152; statement by Ferry in Revue pédagogique, September 15, 1882, pp. 298-299.
(32) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, III, 93; Discours de M. Gambetta au premier congrès de la Ligue de l'enseignement, 21 avril 1881, reproduced in Dessoye, Jean Macé et la fondation de la Ligue de l'enseignement, pp. 261-262.
(33) Harold Stannard, Gambetta and the Foundation of the Third Republic (London: Methuen, 1921), pp. 120-121.
(34) Paul Bert, De l'éducation civique (speech of August 6, 1882) (Paris: Picard-Bernheim, n.d.), p. 9.

To the degree that it was successful, the identification of France with the republic politicized patriotism. It blurred the line between love of country and respect for the regime and it permitted republican political behavior to be justified in terms of the interests of la patrie. In one of his textbooks Ernest Lavisse provided an illustration of this last point when he encouraged the young to do their duty to the republic so that it would become strong enough to liberate Alsace and Lorraine.(35) Jules Steeg was less subtle. He bluntly informed his readers that "today the republic is France herself. One is not a good Frenchman, respectful of the laws and constitution of his country, if one is not a republican."(36)

This mythology sought to make the relations among country, republic, and revolution so close that acceptance of one implied acceptance of all three. The good Frenchman was indeed a good republican who recognized the revolution as the source of the ideals by which he lived.

Concern over how the people would use their freedoms and sovereignty directly inspired that part of civic instruction which dealt with the rights and duties of the citizen. The very emphasis placed on this aspect of the curriculum attests to the extent of the concern. The essence of what the student was taught was the idea that every right imposed a corresponding obligation and that in particular the right to be sovereign inescapably carried with it the duty to be a wise sovereign. This viewpoint could be found throughout the republican educational structure. At the ministerial level René Goblet airily stated that "we decreed that the people are sovereign, and as of the very next day, we demanded from them all the virtues that one usually attributes to sovereignty";(37) and at the level of the classroom a humble instituteur said that "to the degree that a society multiplies the rights of its members, it multiplies their duties and restrains their natural liberty."(38)

---

(35) Pierre Laloi [Ernest Lavisse], La première année d'instruction civique (Paris: Armand Colin, 1880), p. 150.

(36) Jules Steeg, Instruction morale et civique (Paris: N. Fauvé et F. Nathan, 1882), p. 137.

(37) Le Ralliement des instituteurs et institutrices, October 15, 1885, p. 60.

(38) La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices, November 1, 1885, pp. 328-329.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789 was a basic reference.(39) It summarized the liberal principles of the revolution for which the republic stood: popular sovereignty, the rule of law, equality of rights, liberty, property, security, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, etc. But at the same time the document was not radical or excessive by republican standards of the 1870's or 1880's. It stressed only political rights; it clearly circumscribed the notion of equality; and although it referred to "natural and inalienable rights," it also recognized that the liberty of the individual could be legally regulated for the sake of the greater public good. The moderation of the Declaration had obvious appeal to bourgeois republicans and it helped them to disarm their enemies on the right and to reassure the peasantry that democracy within the confines of the republic did not mean a return to the Terror and an attack on wealth.

When discussing rights there was a tendency in some of the textbooks to take back with the right hand what had just been given with the left. Gabriel Compayré proudly proclaimed that liberty was the sum of all the rights a citizen possessed. But then he went on to propound the argument, which gained nothing in clarity for all the times it was repeated, that the freedom of one man stopped before that of another. Later on in the same text, he treated liberty as the power to pursue those courses of action that were dictated by reason.(40) Mézières viewed liberty as a responsibility, namely the responsibility to do good and avoid evil.(41) Jules Steeg explained that true liberty consisted of freeing oneself from ignorance, fear, passion, and "the misery produced by laziness and vice," and his discussion of the subject dwelt on the obligation to defend the rights of others and included a tribute to John Brown whose exploits were cited as examples of self-sacrifice.(42) It would seem that for these authors the distinction between the man who was not free and the man who was lay not so much in their actions as it did in the grounds for their actions. The unfree man did what he did out of fear or as the result of

---

(39) The text cited here is found in John Hall Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 113-115.

(40) Gabriel Compayré, Eléments d'éducation civique et morale (Paris: P. Garcet, Nisius, 1880), pp. 67, 102.

(41) Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, p. 64.

(42) Steeg, Instruction morale et civique, pp. 78-91.

force; the free man, on the other hand, did what he did because he knew it was right and therefore voluntarily chose to do it. It was this distinction between coercion and volition which apparently shaped the teaching of liberty in the primary school.

There were also stipulations surrounding the fundamental right to vote. On the one hand, the voter was expected to be his own man. He was encouraged to think independently, to make up his own mind, and to shun the false promises of street corner charlatans. The ever-present fear of the demagogue no doubt dictated this advice. Education was assumed to be important in examining and analyzing the issues of the day and the candidates' positions. As Paul Bert put it, if the workers could not at least read the newspapers, they would either not know what they were doing or they would be led around by the nose.(43) On the other hand, if thinking and deciding for oneself were desirable, voting on the basis of one's personal interests was not. The elector also had the obligation to be disinterested.(44) In casting his ballot the voter must put behind him all hope of personal gain and consider only the general welfare of the country. Gambetta summarized these obligations when he said that the people would be their own masters when they learned to see the relation of their votes to their government and when they exercised their right of suffrage with intelligence and only in the public interest.(45)

Educators were especially anxious that students rightly understand and appreciate their duties. There was no question that the order and progress of the country depended on each man meeting his responsibilities. A large number of duties were categorized as duties to oneself and duties to others. Middle-class virtues were found in the first category: hygiene, exercise, cleanliness, sobriety, education, courage, prudence, truthfulness, foresight, economy, order, simplicity, faithfulness, and so forth. Duties to others--which included devotion to family, respect for teachers and other public officials, hard work, and kindness to animals--were organized around the notions of justice and charity. Justice was the abstention from all actions that might infringe on the rights of others and was sometimes expressed as the golden rule in the negative. Charity stemmed from

---

(43) Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école, p. 70.

(44) See, for example, G. Bruno [Mme. Alfred Fouillée], Les enfants de Marcel (Paris: Eugène Belin, 1887), p. 202.

(45) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VII, 324.

the principle of fraternity and referred to the positive obligation to help those who were less fortunate than oneself. Both of these ideals were related to the limited republican conception of equality. Equality of rights underlay justice while the natural inequality of ability, fortune, and health inspired charity. Without the former of these ideals society would soon return to barbarism, and without the latter it "would be uninhabitable for the poor, for the unfortunate, for that immense part of the human species which needs to be supported and consoled."(46)

Even more important, however, were the three civic duties--paying taxes, military service, and obeying the law--that were directly aimed at maintaining a well-regulated, powerful state. A simple relation between state revenue and public benefit was posited as the rationale for taxation: the more money paid into the government's coffers, the greater the public weal. Because this rationale implied a wise, benevolent, and prudential stewardship of state funds, the student was supposed to see that payment of his taxes was an investment in his own well-being.

Military service was treated in a most unequivocal manner. The war with Prussia in 1870-1871 ended republican pacifism. National humiliation and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine created a bellicose spirit that was ingrained in schoolchildren. No longer did men like Jules Ferry assert that standing armies were a threat to peace and liberty. Now they held that serving under the colors was not only an honor but the price that must be paid to guarantee one's freedom, secure the frontiers, and prepare for the day when France would be made whole again.(47)

Military education went along with military service. Gambetta and Bert agreed that the civic education of the male child was not complete when he had learned his rights and duties and something about how the government functioned. He also had to know how "to hold a sword, handle a gun, make long marches, spend the night under the stars, [and] valiantly meet all tests in the name of the fatherland."(48) Without this kind of training civic education might be the work of learned men but it would not be the work of patriots. Thus schools began spending more time on gymnastics and physical exercises, and many of them, with the assistance

---

(46) Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, p. 97.

(47) See Raoul Girardet, Le nationalisme français, 1871-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966).

(48) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, II, 23-24.

of groups like the Ligue de l'enseignement and the Ligue des patriotes, instituted military drills and parades. These kinds of activities did not go without criticism. As one teacher pointed out, they had precious little practical military value, they disrupted and detracted from the main purposes of schooling; and they promoted feelings of hatred, violence, and vengeance that seemed strangely out of place in an educational system that was supposed to be enlightened and progressive.(49) Yet for a Bert and a Macé, who sometimes broke down and wept openly in front of their audiences when referring to France's recent misfortunes, militarism in the schools was neither useless nor unseemly. If nothing else, it helped to instill in the young the idea that their highest duty was to their country. In France, a mother did raise her boy to be a soldier.

Explaining the rationale for obeying the law provided an opportunity to set the pupil's thinking straight about the role of revolutionary violence in French history. A standard argument was that previous revolutions were justified because they struck at unrepresentative governments that denied the people their rights but that with the advent of the republic the need for popular revolt had been eliminated.(50) Now that the people expressed their will through legislative enactment one might disagree with a law but he must nonetheless obey it because it reflected the national sovereignty of which he was a part. This view seemed plausible, yet it left the impression that in a free, popularly ruled country there was less room for protest than in a more autocratic one. Nevertheless, the day of the barricades was finally over and done with, and thanks to universal suffrage, said Mézières, "there is no longer room for anyone but conservatives."(51) Even the scrappy Bert, who always seemed to be spoiling for a fight, preferably with a priest or the Hun, drew back in horror at the thought of further political violence: "Against whom would one revolt? Against France? That would be treason!"(52) The republican mythology can be seen here. Opposition to the legal workings of the republic was opposition to the country and ultimately opposition to oneself.

---

(49) L'Ecole nouvelle, September, 1881, pp. 43-45.

(50) See, for example, Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école, pp. 77-78; Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, pp. 132-133; Steeg, Instruction morale et civique, pp. 127-137.

(51) Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, p. 133.

(52) Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école, pp. 77-78.

The theory of representation implied by some civic instruction manuals reinforced the duty to be law-abiding.(53) According to this theory, whose adequacy was rarely questioned, elected officials adhered faithfully to the dictates of their constituents thus producing a close correspondence between state action and popular sentiment. Yet not all republican politicians accepted this view without qualification. Gambetta favored protecting the independence of the deputy.(54) Jules Ferry did not believe the representative should respond to the fantasies and caprices of his electors but that he should be free to use his own judgment in deciding which trends in the current of public opinion were just, practical, and in the interest of the country.(55) Furthermore, both Gambetta and Ferry argued that, far from being a blind follower, the deputy was an educator with the responsibility of guiding and enlightening the opinions of those in whose name he spoke.(56) On the other hand, at one point Macé defended the idea that the candidate's profession of faith was a solemn contract between him and the voters and that if, after being elected, he should ever feel compelled to alter his views, he had the duty to resign since he was no longer the man his electors had approved.(57) Thus the question whether the representative led or mirrored public opinion or in some way did both had not been clearly resolved. The point here is not to criticize the primary school for failure to expose young children to the complexities and uncertainties of political decision making; it is merely to note that instructional materials, in an apparent effort to increase respect for the law, tended to treat an area of utmost importance in democratic theory with a confidence and a clarity that belied the actual state of republican thought and practice.

Although it was an important principle, individualism was limited by the republican conception of the state. The preface to Bert's 1882 civics text included the statement

---

(53) See, for example, Compayré, Eléments d'éducation civique et morale, pp. 164-166; Steeg, Instruction morale et civique, p. 137; Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique, pp. 132-133.

(54) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, IV, 413.

(55) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VI, 343-344.

(56) Ibid.; Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, V, 71-72; see also Eugène Spuller, Education de la démocratie (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1892), pp. 60-61.

(57) Jean Macé, Les idées de Jean-François, Vol. 4: La vérité du suffrage universel (Paris: Emmanuel Vauchez, 1872).

that a nation was not the "simple juxtaposition of individuals bound together by material interests and police laws, but a collective individuality having its reasons for existence and its principles of life."(58) Gambetta's reference to France as a "moral person" indicated a similar perspective.(59) Even before the proclamation of the republic, Ferry had expressed his reservations about individualism as a political principle.(60) In protecting the independence of the citizen against the encroachments of the "social power" individualism had played an honorable historical role, but its weaknesses were that it threatened to produce "the interminable conflict of egoisms" and that it could not organize individuals for the social aspects of life.

The modern, democratic state, being founded on and for the national will, was the appropriate and most legitimate defender and promoter of the general interests.(61) Individual initiative was fine but it was not a substitute for state intervention in the administration of these interests. And unlike in the past, now that France was republican there was no reason to fear such intervention by the state since governmental powers were merely what Gambetta, with his usual facility for turning a phrase, called "the organs of universal suffrage."(62) The thrust of this reasoning, in a word, was that democracy in no way weakened the claims to power of the state; on the contrary, it strengthened them because it legitimized them.

Intertwined with this perception of the state and the social order was the conviction, alluded to earlier, that there was a set of common, fundamental principles upon which the republic rested. Despite the freedom of belief and the freedom of instruction, certain republicans made it quite clear that the regime stood firmly for "a treasure of ideas and sentiments,"(63) to use Ferdinand Buisson's words, that

---

(58) Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école, p. 7.

(59) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, IX, 274-275.

(60) Ferry's article on Marcel Roulleaux in Philosophie positive, September-October, 1867, reproduced in part in Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, I, 581-588.

(61) Ibid., II, 52; Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, IX, 423; Steeg, Instruction morale et civique, pp. 116-117.

(62) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VII, 354; see also Paul Bert, Le cléricalisme (Paris: Armand Colin, 1900), p. 217.

(63) Ferdinand Buisson, La foi laïque (2nd ed.; Paris: Hachette, 1913), p. 20.

it was entitled to defend and propagate. Spuller could not imagine a republican state without its own doctrines,(64) and Bert did not doubt the necessity for infusing the people with a common thought, "a common faith."(65) Ferry, too, candidly admitted to the same belief. He told the Senate in 1880 that although the republic was dedicated to liberty, it nonetheless was the champion of certain social, governmental, and political doctrines.(66) Therefore, in his mind, the state's promise of neutrality was applicable to religion and science but did not extend to questions of politics and morality.(67)

As a primary instrument for the propagation of the republican belief system democratic schooling, it should be pointed out, was something done to children for the sake of the established political order, not something done to them for their own sakes. Bert avowed that the public school was a political institution in the sense that it was designed to pass on to the next generation the heritage of the revolution and to acquaint young people with the nature of the society of which they were a part.(68) And neither Gambetta nor Ferry questioned the right of the state, in creating and supporting schools, to teach its ideals and respect for the revolutionary tradition.(69) It was the social utility of education that in large measure underlay the state's desire to make primary schooling free--so the people could get it--and compulsory--so they would get it.(70) Albeit Ferry pointedly warned teachers to remain aloof from party politics, both he and Buisson, the longtime director of primary education in the ministry of public instruction, charged the instituteurs to be pioneers for the republic, to go out and implant the ideals of the republican state in the pliant minds entrusted to their care.(71) The politique de parti was none of their concern; the politique nationale was their mission. And as far as private schools were concerned, their liberty did not oblige them to undertake proselytism in behalf of the republic but neither did it permit them to undermine the regime. The

---

(64) Spuller, Education de la démocratie, p. 21.
(65) Bert, De l'éducation civique, p. 36.
(66) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 404.
(67) Ibid., III, 272.
(68) Dubreuil, Paul Bert, p. 205; Bert, Leçons, discours et conférences, p. 385.
(69) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VI, 282; Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, IV, 363.
(70) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, IV, 53-54.
(71) Ibid., IV, 245-258; Buisson, La foi laïque, pp. 213-221.

freedom to teach was not unlimited, and the state did not have to tolerate the profession of doctrines deemed noxious to the public weal.(72) In education as in other areas, the republic pledged liberty only within the bounds of its value pattern.

The free, compulsory, and lay primary school was clearly intended to be a standard-bearer of the republic.(73) This weighty responsibility was assigned the school partly because of the great faith placed in education to cut through to the solution of long-standing problems and to prepare the way for peace and prosperity. But at the same time democratic schooling rested on a real distrust of the people and a strong desire to render them willingly defcrent to the current power structure. A statement in one of the textbooks by Lavisse succinctly illustrates this last point:

> the French people, more than another, must respect the law made by its representatives. . . . They must respect the authority of all the agents of the government, from the most humble to the most exalted, . . . for the agents of the authority are the servants of the law, and all are elected directly or indirectly by the representatives of the people.(74)

The aphorism "l'état, c'est moi" was apparently a durable old bottle into which republican wine could be poured.

---

(72) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 64-68; Buisson, La foi laïque, p. 260.

(73) Albert Thibaudet, Les idées politiques de la France (Paris: Librairie Stock, Delamain et Boutelleau, 1932), pp. 172-178.

(74) Laloi, La première année d'instruction civique, pp. 143-144.

Chapter II

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM

France made an auspicious economic recovery after the War of 1870. The peace terms imposed by the Prussians removed from French control Alsace (save Belfort), one-third of Lorraine, and 1,600,000 people. They also stipulated that France would pay an indemnity of five billion francs. Yet, despite these harsh conditions, the dislocation caused by war, and the uncertainty of the new republican regime, the French economy made a strong comeback. The level of postwar economic activity quickly surpassed that of 1869. The value of the 1872 wheat harvest was greater than that for 1869 and the value of the 1874 wheat harvest reached 3,250,000,000 francs. Viticultural production peaked in 1875 at 84 million hectoliters. Industrial production increased by 30 percent between 1871 and 1879. The value of the minerals extracted in 1869 was 156 million francs; that for those extracted in 1873 was 290 millions. The combined values for iron and steel production rose from 245 million francs for 1869 to 362 million francs for 1873. This resurgence made it possible to pay the indemnity by 1874.

Economic growth was facilitated by a vast program of internal improvements undertaken by the republic. The Freycinet plan of 1878, named after the then minister of public works, provided for the development of railway lines, waterways, and port facilities. This program of construction and improvements was intended to cover a ten-year period and to cost four billion francs. Railway development was favored for political as well as economic reasons. Between 1875 and 1913 trackage on primary lines doubled (from 20,000 to 40,000 kilometers), the number of passengers doubled, and the amount of cargo carried quadrupled.

After its postwar recovery, the French economy continued to expand. But the rate of economic growth in the republic before the First World War was generally not as great as that found during the Second Empire. Nor was it as rapid as those of other industrializing countries. Coal production, for example, doubled between 1880 and 1913. But whereas it had increased at an annual rate of 6.1 percent between 1851 and 1853, it increased at the more modest annual rate of 2.4

percent between 1874 and 1896 and the still more modest one of 1.7 percent between 1896 and 1913. Iron and steel production quadrupled between 1875 and 1913. The annual growth rate here increased from 2 percent between 1873 and 1896 to 4.5 percent between 1896 and 1913. But it did not regain the 6.7 percent level of the Second Empire. Comparisons with other countries are revealing. The average annual rates of increase in industrial income between 1896 and 1913 were 4.54 percent for the United States and 3.47 percent for Germany, as compared with 2.56 percent for France. Despite often impressive absolute growth and improvements in living standards, a certain "lack of dynamism" and "relative stagnation" affected the French economy, beginning in the years between 1875 and 1880.(1)

Several factors have been cited to explain this hesitant economic expansion. The translation of scientific discoveries into industrial processes proceeded slowly. There was also delay in the production of machine tools and agricultural equipment. The tradition of the small enterprise consisting of only a few workers organized in artisanal fashion persisted into the twentieth century. After 1880 the country was hit by a long depression aggravated by periodic speculative crises. French agriculture suffered from the importation of cheaper foreign grains and from the dreaded phylloxera, a disease, caused by plant lice of the same name, which destroyed over half of the vinyards in the country. France returned to a system of increasingly higher protective tariffs after 1880, and industry seemed willing to forgo foreign markets in favor of a secure domestic one. There was a tendency on the part of capitalists to either keep their money in savings or to invest in commercial affairs abroad rather than in industry at home. Further, the French birthrate steadily declined and the population of the country grew comparatively little in the last part of the nineteenth century (from 36,900,000 in 1876 to 39,600,000 in 1911).

France was indeed an industrializing nation. Nevertheless, what has been referred to as her "hesitation . . . in the face of industrial civilization, her love, her nostalgia, her fondness for the values of the rural world" should be noted.(2) It is true that in the early Third Republic there was a population movement away from the countryside and into the cities and a corresponding shift in types of occupations. Yet this assertion must be kept in context. France did not

---

(1) Jean-Marie Mayeur, François Bédarida, Antoine Prost, and Jean-Louis Monneron, Histoire du peuple français: cent ans d'esprit républicain (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie de France, 1964), p. 58.

(2) Ibid.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

urbanize as rapidly or as extensively as did some of her neighbors. At the outbreak of the First World War, France had only 16 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (some 13 percent of the total population) as opposed to 47 cities in this category in England and 45 in Germany. In 1911, 55.8 percent of the French population was still classified as rural. The occupational structure was certainly changing, but the "resistance" of the agricultural sector cannot be denied. In 1876, 52.1 percent of the working males were in agriculture, 26.2 percent were in industry, and 21.7 percent were in the so-called tertiary sector. By 1906 the second and third figures had risen to 30.5 percent and 25.4 percent, respectively. The fact remained, however, that 44.1 percent of the working male population was still on the soil.

Failure to recognize the reluctance to let go of an old way of life and to embrace wholeheartedly a new one would distort the perspective for discussing education and social concerns. Industrial workers were indeed vulnerable to new kinds of problems. Governments did indeed seem incredibly timid in dealing with the hardships born of industrialism. However, the accusation that the governments were callously unresponsive to "the people" can be overdrawn.(3) From a numerical standpoint, "the people" of republican France were largely peasants. These peasants tended to be traditional and conservative. They did not necessarily understand industrialism and many of them were probably suspicious of it. The bourgeois politicians that made up the governments shared basic values with the peasantry. It is not surprising, therefore, that republican leaders should have sought to establish the new regime on the good will of the rural population.

Within this framework, what did the republic offer in the way of social reform? What did the leaders of the early Third Republic believe to be the state's responsibility in the treatment of social questions? And what was perceived to be the relationship between education and social welfare?

It should be noted that republicanism, as a political idea, did not present a clear doctrine on the question of social reform. This had been painfully evident during the Revolution of 1848. At that time many persons rallied to the republic because they believed it promised state intervention in behalf of the laboring classes and a fairer distribution of wealth in addition to increased political and civil rights. The kind and extent of the reforms that it would undertake were the measure of the republic. Others, however, pledged

---

(3) See Emile Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république (Paris: Aux bureaux de la Philosophie positive, 1880), pp. 581-587.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

their support to the republic only on condition that it would not pose a threat to property rights, interfere with established employer-employee relations, or countenance any experiments that might be considered tinged with the ideas of socialism. For these persons the establishment of the republic was more narrowly interpreted to mean the creation of a new political form which, by definition, did not necessarily imply alterations in prevailing social and economic arrangements.

This difference in expectation undermined the Second Republic from the start. The members of the provisional government that held power in the spring of 1848 were divided on this issue, and one reason for the bloody confrontations that took place in June of that year was the disillusionment of certain groups over what they felt was the government's betrayal of the ideals of the "democratic and social" republic.

With the proclamation of a Third Republic on September 4, 1870, the question of republican social policy again raised widespread interest. On the answer to this question would in part depend the chances for the republic's survival and who would be its friends and its enemies.

The "opportunist" republicans tried to straddle the issue. They wished to promote reform but they did not want to alienate conservative elements whose support the republic needed if it was going to gain a solid footing. This proved to be a difficult policy to follow. It involved compromise, a good sense of timing and of what was possible under given conditions, and, at times, a delicate reinterpretation of the meaning of the ideals one claimed to espouse.

It is all too easy to find fault with the moderate republican leaders. They can be accused of hypocrisy and even deceit. But it must be remembered that in the fluid political situation of the 1870's their primary concern was to see the republic established as an accepted constitutional fact. That they were willing to pay too high a price for this result was argued then and still can be argued now. The concern at hand is not to judge this question. Rather it is to explore the social policy of these moderates especially as it relates to education.

Léon Gambetta was optimistic about the steady improvement of man's moral and material conditions in a democracy.(4)

---

(4) Joseph Reinach, ed., Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta (11 vols.; Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881-1885), I, 423.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

He believed in what he called "an immanent law of progressive justice" which was working itself out in human affairs.(5) And he argued that the growing knowledge of science would lead to the elevation of man.(6)

But Gambetta was not a revolutionary. The amelioration of the living and working conditions of the masses would be gradual. "Societies do not begin with the ideal," he said; "human groups do not move in a single bound either to absolute perfection or even to a better state: progress is the work of time and of patience."(7)

This belief in evolutionary improvement influenced his approach to reform. In a widely noted speech delivered at Le Havre in 1872, Gambetta denied the existence of "a social question" that could be speedily resolved by the application of a single remedy.(8) Instead he saw a series of distinct, if interrelated, problems that called for a variety of solutions. To attempt to treat all of these issues at the same time would lead to confusion and failure. The more promising approach consisted of attacking the issues one by one in accord with a list of priorities, of treating each problem methodically and with due deliberation, and of taking action only at the propitious moment. These characteristics were the essence of "opportunisme." Although he did not like the name because of its pejorative connotations, he defended the policy as being one of reason and success.(9)

Specific social concerns were not apparently high on Gambetta's list of priorities. In his republican program outlined in a speech given at Romans in September, 1878, and in his declaration of government of November, 1881, attention was focused on such areas as the state administration, the judiciary, the military, church-state relations, and education.(10)

Two related reasons might be offered to explain this apparent disregard for social problems. In the first place, the overriding concern for securing the republic against its enemies and establishing it as an unquestionable fact prevailed into the 1880's. Gambetta was still intent upon con-

---

(5) Ibid., I, 248.
(6) Ibid., II, 255.
(7) Ibid., IV, 307.
(8) Ibid., II, 263.
(9) Ibid., IX, 399.
(10) Ibid., VIII, 226-252; X, 33-35.

quering first and then philosophizing later.(11) Second, given this preoccupation with placing the republic on a firm foundation it might be argued that he judged that the time was not right for broaching directly the subject of social reform; the opportune moment had not yet arrived.

On the other hand, there are reasons for contending that from Gambetta's point of view these statements of program were indeed relevant to social concerns. According to a particular conception of the relationship between political and social questions that was commonly found in one school of republican thought, the nature of social reforms followed from and was dependent upon the form of government. Attention to the elaboration of the political structure was therefore not an evasion of social reforms; it was both a necessary precondition for and a determinant of these reforms. Gambetta had clearly endorsed this viewpoint early in his political career. "I think that the progressive series of these social reforms," he said during the electoral campaign of 1869, "depends absolutely on the political regime and on political reform, and it is an axiom for me in these matters that the form implies and decides the substance."(12)

The social relevance of these program statements can be further defended in that both contained references to education. Many moderate republicans considered education a primary means for eliminating social and economic ills. In the 1878 speech at Romans, Gambetta referred to education as "the beginning of the solution to the social problems that weigh upon the world."(13) On another occasion he called it "the keystone of social renovation."(14)

Education could improve a man's situation in life because it could liberate him. For centuries the masses had been held in material and mental bondage. They had toiled without hope of significantly bettering themselves. Superstition and prejudice had stifled their intellectual development. Their talents and abilities had lain dormant. In this state they could neither understand their conditions nor act intelligently to change them.

---

(11) See his letter to Gustave Masure of February 3, 1875, in P. B. Gheusi, Gambetta: Life and Letters, trans. by Violette M. Montagu (New York: D. Appleton, 1910), p. 319.

(12) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, I, 423.

(13) Ibid., VIII, 247-248.

(14) Ibid., IX, 482-483.

The revolution and the republic marked an awakening. The enlightened citizen, conscious of his rights and powers, and democratically participating in the conduct of his government, was to replace the poor, credulous serf. A modern educational system established on republican principles, infused with the truths of science, and dedicated to the full development of reason and talent was surely the ideal instrument for freeing both men and women from their servile past, for increasing their personal prosperity, and for establishing the reign of peaceful and indefinite social progress.

Gambetta affirmed this position in his public addresses. He asserted that the reformed primary school would "from the highest sources let fall on tender, young minds the prestigious light of science and [would] plant in them the seed of the progress of public reason."(15) Or again, "we have seen that the first thing that must be done is to take the mind of the child and furnish it, . . . enlighten it, and to do that in the only way worthy of a free people, that is, to enlighten it by the pure light of reason and science, instead of leaving it in the darkness of credulity and superstition!"(16)

Such a modern education would have a direct bearing on the social and economic status of the worker. "It is also necessary that this instruction become an element of production," he stated in June, 1878," that the worker find in it the augmentation of his productive force; it is necessary that his manual capital, seconded, aroused, and increased by his intellectual capital, become the source of comfort and wealth."(17) In supporting vocational training, Gambetta held out the promise that an education of the mind and hand would produce competent workers capable of rising through the ranks to the highest levels of capitalism.(18) This opportunity for upward mobility was to be a characteristic of democratic society. In the past, status was a function of wealth, birth, arbitrary privilege, or even chance. In a democracy, however, merit, patience, and effort would determine one's social and economic standing.(19) By equally providing the opportunity for learning, the republic would permit each individual to develop his intelligence and talents and to advance freely as far as his abilities would take him.

---

(15) Ibid., VIII, 247.
(16) Ibid., IX, 482-483.
(17) Ibid., VIII, 202.
(18) Ibid., VIII, 247-248.
(19) Ibid., IX, 309.

Another desirable aspect of this conception of the relationship between education and reform was that progress could be achieved peacefully. The patient acquisition of material rewards through enlightened intelligence would bring "the victory of right and justice" without the need for violence and civil strife.(20) Gambetta looked forward to the time when rational employees, disabused of false dreams of utopia, and equally rational employers, sensitive to the legitimate demands of workers, such as the right to organize for the protection and promotion of their interests, would be able to sit down together and in free, open discussion resolve their problems and plan for future prosperity. In this way, he thought, society would find "its equilibrium, its repose, its stability, and its indefinite progress in unbroken order."(21)

Beyond providing education, Gambetta recognized that the republican state had other obligations in regard to the social and economic welfare of the people. As the custodian of the "great social interests" of the country, the state should turn itself toward sickness, misery, unemployment, and "the uncertainties of existence"; it had "a mandate for protection, assistance, and providence."(22)

The exact terms of this mandate remained ambiguous. Gambetta was not hesitant about referring to the state as the great helper but it was difficult to pin him down on the what, when, and how of concrete proposals. In an address at the port of Honfleur in September, 1881, he admitted that in addition to education "there is a whole series of measures and institutions to organize."(23) He then mentioned specifically "institutions of providence, credit, assistance, and mutual help," and accorded the state a role in the development of these agencies. But this role was limited to assisting private endeavor when it faltered. The state was not to act as a substitute for the volition of private citizens; rather it was to encourage, support, and assist this volition and "to lead each citizen to the full flowering of his intelligence and reason."

The goal of state action, then, like that of education, was not so much to provide direct remedies for social problems as it was to help individuals help themselves. The republican state owed the people equal access to the means for self-improvement and the freedom to use their trained capa-

---

(20) Ibid., IX, 449.
(21) Ibid., XI, 9.
(22) Ibid., IX, 162.
(23) Ibid., IX, 480-484.

cities to better themselves. It did not guarantee the results of these measures, however. Gambetta candidly admitted the limits to what could be legitimately expected from the state in remarks he made to a group of workers in November, 1878:

> Those who imagine that it is the duty, or that it lies within the power, of the Government to secure the happiness of all, are pursuing a mirage. Strictly speaking, there is only one thing that a Government owes to all, and that is, justice. Every man being his own master, it rests with him to make himself happy or unhappy by using his freedom to good or bad purpose. The State does no more than guarantee an equality of rights to everyone, be he rich or poor, high or low.(24)

Jules Ferry's approach to social questions was very much like that of Gambetta. He, too, operated from the assumption that the progress of humanity was inevitable despite the possibility of momentary setbacks. The forecast of such progress was not mere political rhetoric; it was rooted in positivism which provided "the scientific demonstration" of man's steady improvement.(25) Instead of viewing mankind as "a fallen race, struck down by original sin, and painfully dragging itself along in a valley of tears," positivism offered the perspective of "an endless procession marching forward toward the light."

But this procession was on a long course, and its movement, though sure, was slow. Ferry, like Gambetta, tenaciously clung to gradualism, and he contemptuously dismissed as false prophets those who preached the immediate renovation of society. One day, to be sure, all humanity would be reconciled in "a beautiful and great social unity; but this was the slow work of centuries."(26)

Positivism served to justify a gradualistic approach to reform. It also seemed to endorse the means for reform that were espoused by moderate republicans. According to Ferry, Auguste Comte had demonstrated that within every

---

(24) Cited in Paul Deschanel, Gambetta (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1920), p. 258 and found in Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VIII, 377-379.

(25) Paul Robiquet, ed., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry (7 vols.; Paris: Armand Colin, 1893-1898), II, 196-197.

(26) Paul Brulat, Histoire populaire de Jules Ferry (Paris: Paclot, 1907), pp. 109-110.

society there was a regulating force, a "moral power," which governed the wills of the people.(27) In a free society, this power was called opinion. Any attempt at change, however sincere and well intentioned, that did not take into account the state of public opinion would likely fail. Court decisions, police actions, and legislation could not yield productive results in disregard of this basic social force. On the other hand, opinions were not constant for all time. They could be modified and enlightened. And as they were progressively enlightened the possibility of durable reform increased. This viewpoint can be clearly seen in the statement Ferry made in 1890 at a meeting of the Association philotechnique, an organization founded in 1848 to give instruction to the working classes:

> . . . one will resolve these formidable [social] problems neither by quackish formulas, nor by vexatious legislation, one will certainly not resolve them by class warfare, by the systematic organization of opposing egoisms which would divide society into the besiegers and the besieged.
>
> Nothing will happen without the rapprochement of minds, which leads to the reconciliation of hearts.(28)

Therefore, reforms involved more than legislation. To be successful they had to be in accord with the gradual evolution of popular sentiment. Education was thus relevant to reform in two ways. Not only could it develop the individual's intelligence and abilities, it could also help shape a climate of opinion in which reform efforts would be profitable.

The concern for public opinion had a political advantage that was not lost on "opportunist" republicans. It could be used as an eminently democratic justification for one's political preferences. For a long time Ferry and Gambetta opposed revising the constitution. They argued that it would be unsettling and that "the people" did not want it. However, when the Senate refused to approve a change in the configuration of electoral districts that Gambetta strongly desired, he came out in favor of revision, albeit limited, and Ferry quickly followed suit. The reversal of position was defended on the grounds that "the people" now wanted to

---

(27) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, I, 586-588.
(28) Ibid., VII, 378.

alter the constitutional laws. Exactly who "the people" were and how it was possible to know their views on all specific issues and proposals were questions that were not thoroughly explored. And it must be remembered that although Ferry spoke out against straying from public opinion, he nevertheless did not believe that the faithful representative was merely a slave to the wishes of his electors. On balance, Ferry and Gambetta fastened on the state of public opinion to justify both their push for the establishment of the republic and their hesitation to see the republic move too rapidly on the issue of social reform.

Ferry was straightforward and consistent in describing what he believed was owed to "the democracy of the underprivileged." In a speech at Rouen in October, 1883, he directly posed and answered the pertinent question: "What do we owe to this democracy and what does it have the right to ask of us? Two things that our society assures them [sic] more completely from day to day: education and liberty."(29)

Education was a major part of the democratic effort to promote equality. Ferry treated this topic extensively in a famous speech he gave in April, 1870, at the Salle Molière in Paris.(30) Since the revolution there had been a great increase in the equality of rights. The freedom for the individual to find work without being inhibited by the closed corporations of the ancien régime and the establishment of universal suffrage were two major conquests of equality. But there still remained "the last, and the most formidable" form of inequality, the inequality of education. Ferry made the vow in 1870 to devote himself to the elimination of this inequality.

Unless people had the same opportunity to educate themselves there would never be a real equality of rights, which was "the essence of democracy." As long as the quantity and quality of learning a person received depended on the circumstances into which he was born, society would be ordered in a caste system wherein "science would be the exclusive privilege of wealth." There would always be authority relationships and distinctions between social conditions, but in a democratic society these would be functions of competence and merit, not of class and privilege. Commanding and obeying were variables; depending on the task and one's skills, each person would have his turn as a leader and a follower.

---

(29) Ibid., VI, 168.
(30) Ibid., I, 283-305.

From another point of view, equality of education was necessary to "the creation of truly democratic mores." An egalitarian society implied that all citizens shared a common core of values, a "brotherhood of ideas." The inculcation of such a core was not possible unless there was a rapprochement, a fusion, "which results from mixing the rich and the poor on the benches of the same school."

Equality of education also meant a change in attitude toward women. The "pride of sex," in Ferry's opinion, was much more persistent and deep-seated than the "pride of class." He vigorously protested against the common presumption of male intellectual superiority--which was all too often accepted by women--and he argued that girls were indeed worthy of the same modern education that was desired for boys. This position was prompted by more than a concern for equity. An enlightened woman would be an enlightened wife and an enlightened mother. The intellectual transformation of the woman would have almost incalculable educational consequences. Ferry spoke glowingly of an uplifted homelife, "animated by conversation, embellished by reading." The importance of instructing females could be easily summarized: "The one who controls the woman is the one who controls all, first because he controls the child, and then because he controls the husband." The church recognized the truth of this proposition. This is why there would be a struggle between the church and democracy to determine who would direct female education. Ferry ended his speech by throwing down the gauntlet: "Citizens, woman will either belong to science or to the church."

His interest in education focused on the vocational as well as the intellectual and moral aspects. As premier in 1884 he was forced to admit that "professional" education was not as fully developed as he would have liked. Nonetheless he looked forward to the time when there would be handwork instruction in all the primary schools and vocational curricula in the higher primary schools.(31)

Ferry's stated goal was to prepare the student sufficiently well so that he would be able to select his occupation at the end of primary schooling. To have the opportunity to select a career implied that vocational education would be flexible enough to permit viable alternatives; it would have to be polytechnical. Ferry feared narrow specialization. He considered it degrading and dangerous in an industrial economy that was changing technologically.

---

(31) Ibid., VI, 226-241.

Further, he looked to "professional" education to restore a certain human quality to industrial production. The achievements of the machine age were undeniable, "but in the triumph of the machine, the human personality risks being destroyed."(32) A broad and liberal vocational education was a corrective for this adverse tendency of mechanization. It would protect "that skillfulness of hand, that fineness of taste and execution" that were the glories of the French worker.(33)

These thoughts on vocational education rested on a somewhat romanticized view of the world of work. They may even be considered hostile to industrialism. At best they were directed at preparation for a type of production that was slowly disappearing. Ferry's concern for skilled handwork and "fineness of taste and execution" was not wholly relevant to the factory system. Training in all the processes of a particular trade was not vital in industries that were mechanized and based on a division of labor. Routine performance of a simple, if onerous, task did not call for a high level of "professional" competence.(34) Another difficulty lay in the desire to make vocational education polytechnical. It was not feasible to train a given student thoroughly in a number of trades. Yet if in school he only received instruction in basic skills, specific vocational preparation would be merely postponed until a later time. The most nagging question, however, was that which concerned where to draw the line between general education and vocational training. In the higher primary schools and institutions of a similar grade, was the latter to be an adjunct of the former or the other way around?

The beginnings of vocational education in the early republic reflected the confused thinking on the subject. On the one hand, Paris and other cities and towns founded écoles d'apprentissage (apprenticeship schools). These schools provided training for a specific occupation and placed general education in a subordinate role. On the other hand, the state écoles primaires supérieures (higher primary schools) claimed to offer vocational education, too, but their instruction was less specialized and they tended to devote more time to general education. By a law of December 11, 1880, the apprenticeship schools were assimilated with the higher primary schools. Then by decree in July, 1881, a condominium

---

(32) Ibid., VII, 386.
(33) Ibid.
(34) Antoine Prost, L'Enseignement en France, 1800-1967 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968), pp. 305-310.

arrangement was established whereby the apprenticeship schools were placed under the titular control of the ministry of commerce while the higher primary schools stayed under the jurisdiction of the ministry of public instruction.

Since budgetary authority for these types of schools remained with the ministry of public instruction, the development of the apprenticeship schools languished, giving rise to complaints by officials in the ministry of commerce. In 1887 a special commission investigated the conflicting viewpoints of the two ministries. Ferdinand Buisson spoke for public instruction and G. Ollendorf for commerce. The positions these two men defended showed the extent of the cleavage of opinion on vocational education that existed at the time. Buisson stated the case for putting general education--the intellectual and moral education of the man--first: "A professional school . . . is not primarily an industrial establishment; it is before all an establishment of education and instruction. . . . The best apprenticeship school is a higher primary school where apprenticeship is embedded in general culture. . . ."(35) On the other side, Ollendorf stated the case for a true vocational training. He defended the intellectual merits of such training and argued that it was necessary for the prosperity of the French economy. And he gave a homely illustration of the chief disadvantage of the higher primary schools:

> The hosiers of Paris and Troyes, for example, want to establish a school of hosiery. Where do they go for help? They go where the money is. "We want a hosiery school," they say to Public Instruction. "We will give you more and better," Public Instruction replies. "We will give you a higher primary school with a course in hosiery."
>
> You must admit, gentlemen, that if this proposal is realized, the hosiers of Paris and Troyes will have agreed to useless sacrifices. Maybe they will get clerks for their stores, if they are not forced to close down. But they will not get workers for their factories. Primary education does not make workers.(36)

In 1892, the issue was at least partially resolved. By the finance law of January 26 of that year the most vocationally oriented higher primary schools were transferred to the

---

(35) Ibid., pp. 317-318.
(36) Ibid., pp. 318-319.

control of the ministry of commerce under the new title of *écoles pratiques du commerce et de l'industrie* (practical schools of commerce and industry). The attention to vocational training in these renamed schools was significantly increased. Nevertheless, the achievements of vocational education in French primary education remained small. At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the productivity of all types of "professional" schools was but "a drop of water in the sea of employment."(37) These schools produced some foremen and craftsmen, but the great mass of workingmen continued to enter the labor force without benefit of occupational training. This fact is due to more than the rivalry between two governmental agencies. In large measure it reflects the reluctance of the republican leadership to face squarely the economic realities of the late nineteenth century.

Freedom was the other major pillar of Ferry's social program. The meaning of this term must be understood within a legal context. The Great Revolution had abolished the corporations of masters and workers and had denied the right to organize. Such action was taken under the guise of freedom of work. The prohibition against organization was maintained under the Napoleonic penal code and by the legislation of subsequent regimes. Yet, clandestine workers' groups existed and their activities were sometimes winked at by the government. The vulnerability of the individual worker in industry, however, led to the demand for the establishment of the legal right to form unions. The republicans supported this demand and the law of March 22, 1884, passed during the Ferry ministry, restored this right. The freedom that Ferry espoused was largely this freedom for workers to organize in defense of their interests.

Shortly before the abovementioned law was enacted, Ferry stated his case in behalf of the bill in the Chamber of Deputies.(38) He repeated the argument that liberty was a debt that the republican state owed to citizens. The freedom for workers to unionize, to discuss openly salary demands and desired improvements in the conditions of their work, and even to strike was not something to be feared. He tried to convince the legislators that such freedom, on the contrary, would reduce the number of strikes, would make amicable solutions to industrial disputes easier to achieve, and would increase the willingness of workers to arbitrate their grievances.

---

(37) *Ibid.*, p. 310.
(38) Robiquet, ed., *Discours de Ferry*, VI, 234-236.

This rosy picture may be interpreted as the attempt of a politician to garner support for his measure by exaggerating the benefits that would supposedly derive from it. Given the time and circumstances in which Ferry was speaking, this interpretation no doubt has some merit. But these optimistic assertions can also be explained in terms of how he believed workers' associations would function. He was counting on the experience of intelligent workingmen to help them realize that unionization alone was not a panacea. The benefits of combination would not appear overnight. They would only come to light during the course of years as workers learned what was possible and realistic for them to expect to achieve in the present social order. From this point of view, the freedom to join a union was an aspect of the freedom to expand one's opportunity to learn. Simply stated, a union, in Ferry's mind, was "a powerful means of education for workers."

Finally, in addition to education and freedom, Ferry lightly touched on the role of the state as "the natural superintendent of social providence."(39) He was referring here to state involvement in retirement programs, mutual help funds, savings banks, and insurance schemes. Like Gambetta Ferry thought the government could supplement private effort in these areas. He specifically suggested that it could encourage thrift by creating savings banks and that, if necessary, it could give subventions to insurance programs. On the latter point, however, Ferry made clear his opposition to compulsion. Compulsory participation in welfare programs corrupted them by making providence an obligation rather than a virtue. It would seem that the spirit behind welfare was as important as the welfare, itself.

Jules Ferry carefully developed his approach to the social question. The basic elements of this approach remained quite stable. Despite the clamor from certain quarters for bold strokes and radical measures, Ferry remained faithful to the program based on education, freedom, and limited state intervention in welfare activities. For him this program was practical and just because it represented "the mean of the reform thought of the society in which we live."(40)

The more radical republicans considered the policies of Gambetta and Ferry shamefully timid. Georges Clemenceau, for a time leader of the republican left wing, scathingly criticized the governments of the moderates for failing to take

---

(39) Ibid., VI, 240-241.
(40) Ibid., VI, 241.

action on what he considered the traditional republican program. Once they had wrested power from the monarchists, the moderates had lapsed into immobility, fearing that movement toward reform would threaten their newly acquired status. They had become "empirical," in the pejorative sense of the French term; they lacked both a doctrine and a method; expediency for the sake of survival was the sum of their policy.(41) As he once trenchantly remarked: "M. Thiers had proposed to the monarchists to make the republic without the republicans; today we have the republicans without the republic."(42)

What was needed, in a word, was a government that would be more vigorous in making good on longstanding republican promises. Church and state should be definitively separated. The constitution should be revised to place all power in a single, popularly elected chamber. The financial and administrative structures of the state should be thoroughly overhauled in accord with republican principles. More civil rights legislation should be passed to firmly guarantee the freedoms of the citizen. And the state should do more to protect the poor and to assist the underprivileged in their search for a better existence. Thus where a Gambetta or a Ferry was apt to counsel caution and patient waiting for the opportune moment, Clemenceau was prone to urge direct action. There were differences in objectives between the moderates and the radicals, e.g., on the issue of constitutional reform. But the major cleavage between the two groups centered on the questions of timing and extent. For the moderates, the radicals demanded too much too soon. For the radicals, the moderates offered too little too late.

In a speech at Marseille in October, 1880, Clemenceau urged the adoption of a series of measures which, he felt, would contribute significantly to the resolution of current social and economic problems.(43) Included in this list were the legal recognition of the right to organize and the creation of insurance programs. But he went beyond these items and recommended a progressive income tax (which Gambetta

---

(41) Georges Clemenceau, "Speech of August 12, 1881, at the Cirque Fernando," La Justice, August 15, 1881, p. 2.

(42) Georges Clemenceau, Discours prononcé par M. Clemenceau au Cirque Fernando, May 25, 1884 (Paris: Imprimerie Schiller, 1884), pp. 1-2.

(43) Georges Clemenceau, Discours prononcé par M. Clemenceau à Marseille, October 28, 1880 (Paris: Imprimerie Schiller, 1880), pp. 30-31.

accepted and Ferry opposed); the right for employees to have a voice in determining the rules of the workshop; restrictions on the use of child labor; a reduction in the length of the workday; and public management of railways, canals, and mines. These and similar proposals would certainly promote "a better distribution of wealth." Further, they were not unrealistic. They did not signify that the republic was embarked on a reckless, visionary social policy. Admittedly, no one program could be thought of as the definitive answer to the so-called social question. And it was a mistake to believe that the people were so unreasonable as to expect this kind of a final solution. French democracy, he said, "only wants the possible, but it wants all of the possible."

The conflict between Clemenceau and the opportunists should not be pushed to the point of overlooking their areas of agreement. Although he continually chided the moderates for their extreme cautiousness and was willing to move farther and faster than they thought advisable at the moment, Clemenceau, too, believed that education was the primary element of social reform. Only the education of the people would assure "the definitive triumph of the political and social revolution begun by our fathers" because "intellectual emancipation is the true foundation of economic emancipation."(44) The whole purpose of democracy, in fact, could be interpreted as this intellectual emancipation of "the least enlightened,"(45) and the government that provided a complete system of mass education could take pride in "the greatest effort that has ever been made for the solution of the social question."(46)

Clemenceau was in basic agreement with Ferry's position that education was indispensable to equality.(47) The masses would never be able to profit from an equality of rights if learning remained the privilege of the few. But with equal access to knowledge the present generation could stand on its own feet, could recognize its own interests, and could itself--"without the help of any individuality"--solve the problems bequeathed to it by the past.(48)

This last point is worthy of note. It is indicative of how far away Clemenceau was from the idea of a welfare state. Government intervention to protect and succor the

---

(44) Ibid., p. 29.
(45) Clemenceau, Discours, May 25, 1884, pp. 42-43.
(46) Clemenceau, "Speech of August 12, 1881," p. 2.
(47) Editorial, La Justice, November 3, 1882, p. 1.
(48) Georges Clemenceau, "Speech of October 30, 1882," La Justice, November 1, 1882, p. 3.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

poor was necessary for the moment. But it was only an interim objective. The ultimate goal was to "emancipate" the individual so that he and his fellows would be able to prosper relying on their own strength.(49) Thus the more the state did today for the education of the people, the less it would conceivably have to do tomorrow for their welfare.

Clemenceau's criticism of the educational legislation of the early 1880's was again more one of degree than one of tendency. The Ferry school laws pointed in the right direction but they did not go far enough. What was required was "integral instruction." By this term he meant a more expanded program of intellectual, moral, vocational, and civic education than that presently contemplated by moderates for the public schools.(50) Rather than proceeding piecemeal, as was being done, there should be a vast national plan for education. A "rational and scientific" curriculum--more than a little reading, writing, and arithmetic--needed to be devised. Better teaching methods had to be found and better teachers trained to use them. All religious influence must be eliminated from the schools. Further, secondary education should be made more readily available to talented graduates of the primary institutions. And in order for the schools to reach and hold all children, the state should be prepared to indemnify poor parents who could not easily dispense with the earning power of their young. These were the kinds of steps that would have to be taken if a full and complete system of republican education were to be realized. It was granted that such a program would be costly. But if the national assembly was willing to spend billions for internal improvements (i.e., the Freycinet plan), it should certainly be ready to find sufficient funds for this more important task. "The equipping of humans is more pressing than the equipping of the economy. Bridges can wait, men cannot."

This brief exploration of the ideas of Gambetta, Ferry, and Clemenceau points to some basic assumptions about social reform that were prevalent in the early Third Republic. In the first place, the republicans eschewed collectivism. The individual was the focus of their thought (if not always of their practice). The idea of distinct classes and special interest groups--each with its particular and stable character--was both noxious and dangerous. In theory, at least, they held to the notion of an open society of free and equal individuals who rose, or fell, in the social order on the basis of their competence and merit. The acceptance of the

---

(49) Clemenceau, Discours, May 25, 1884, pp. 39-40.
(50) Clemenceau, Discours, October 28, 1880, pp. 28-29; Editorial, La Justice, November 3, 1882, p. 1.

right to form unions and other "professional" associations did not contradict individualism. Such organizations were seen as aids to the development and prosperity of individuals. Free discussion of common concerns among peers would be educative, and mutual assistance could enhance the welfare of each member. Moreover, in the opinion of the philosopher Charles Renouvier, whose ideas influenced republican ideology, the right of association would to some degree counterbalance the inequality of wealth in society and would "compensate the people for the deprivations which they suffered under the existing system."(51)

The wellspring of human activity was self-interest. Republican spokesmen, including radicals like Clemenceau, agreed on this point and cited it as a reason why they rejected socialism and communism.(52) This tenet shaped their handling of the question of property rights, which was the great problem of nineteenth-century economic thought.(53) The individual who accumulated wealth, following his natural self-interest, was entitled to the fruits of his efforts. To deny this proposition violated elementary equity and a basic fact of human nature. Without the opportunity to acquire and enjoy property in security, the motive for working and creating would be thwarted. French republicans did not therefore challenge the existing economic order. The goal of government intervention in social and economic affairs was not to change the rules of the game for the benefit of the unfortunate. Rather it was to help the unfortunate better play the game according to the established rules.

When Clemenceau argued for a fairer distribution of wealth, he was not attacking capitalism or private property. He was alluding to a viewpoint which was later developed into the doctrine of solidarité.(54) This doctrine admitted the legitimacy of private property but maintained that when a gross imbalance in its distribution arose, the state could take action to help rectify the imbalance. Society was premised on a tacit contract among men whereby each rendered services to the group in return for the protection of his existence. State action to assist the poor was a form of reparative justice and served to uphold the social contract.

---

(51) John A. Scott, Republican Ideas and the Liberal Tradition in France, 1870-1914 (1951; reprint ed.; New York: Octagon Books, 1966), p. 70.

(52) Clemenceau, Discours, May 25, 1884, p. 40; Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VI, 233-234.

(53) Albert Bayet and François Albert, Les écrivains politiques du XIX^e siècle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1907), pp. 10-11.

(54) Scott, Republican Ideas, pp. 157-186.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Once corrective measures had been taken, the state would withdraw and allow the economy to continue its normal operation. Although it contained theoretical and practical defects, this doctrine was central to the radical republican effort to deal with the problem of how "to reconcile the traditional liberal theory of laissez-faire with a social policy that would permit state intervention in industrial life."(55)

That the republicans considered education the primary means of social reform is not surprising. Education was ostensibly for the individual. It was something most people agreed was desirable. It posed no direct threat to the social and economic status quo; its effects would appear gradually and peacefully. Yet it seemed to promise untold benefits. By it the masses could be liberated from the sway of prejudice and superstition and, for the first time, could be prepared intellectually and vocationally to compete successfully in the world of work. And their gain did not necessarily imply loss for others because an expanded labor force of competent, hard working citizens would produce more wealth, making it possible for all to prosper. Furthermore, education would create social harmony and make possible orderly improvement. By exposing social nostrums it would make workers realistic and discipline their impulses, and by instilling the ideals of democracy it would make the more fortunate members of society aware of their social obligations and sensitive to the demands of justice and fraternity.

In placing so much stress on education the republicans effectively converted social problems into educational problems. Attention to education could easily come to be considered an adequate substitute for dealing directly with the difficulties spawned by the socio-economic structure. Indeed, as a remedy education would not meet these difficulties head-on but would side-step them by girding individuals so that they would no longer be vulnerable to the ills which had traditionally plagued them. And if after having been given the opportunity to be educated one should still languish in misery, then it could safely be assumed that the failure was that of the person, not that of society and its government. All that the latter could be asked to provide was the means for improvement. Improvement, itself, was the responsibility of the individual.

It is certainly possible to conclude that the republic expected too much from education and its schools. But this judgment, though credible, depends on hindsight. The educational goals of the French republic were no loftier than

---

(55) Ibid., p. 124.

those of other democratic countries. Jules Ferry and Horace Mann were equally exacting in their expectations. The effort to establish workable systems of mass education was a novel experiment in the nineteenth century. Those who superintended this effort had little experience to fall back upon. To be sure, popular primary schooling was far from unknown in France. There was, after all, the precedent of the Guizot law of 1833. Yet the school laws of previous regimes in the century had never been fully implemented and, more important, they had not been inspired by the vision of a truly comprehensive, "modern," secular, and democratic education. That reformers might therefore miscalculate or overstate the efficacy of their achievements is understandable.

The fact that they were venturing into an area that had not been explored in detail accounts for an essential characteristic of the educational thinking of the time. The outcomes of the type of education that the republicans envisaged were not then susceptible of demonstration. There was no adequate empirical basis on which to justify the enthusiastic assertions. Consequently, many of the claims made for education must be seen as statements of faith. Although Gambetta may have been given to flights of fancy, the reserved Ferry was noted for the logical, methodical way he developed his arguments, and Clemenceau was a most tough-minded, penetrating critic. But when these latter two men spoke of the "emancipation" of the individual, when they described the blessings to be derived from the intellectual "liberation" of the citizenry, one can almost sense that at these moments they were awe-struck by the wondrousness of their subject.

This faith in education stemmed in part from the general acceptance of the idea of progress, an idea that seemed confirmed by the very existence of the republic. It also derived from an enormous respect for science, which was daily altering the physical environment in miraculous ways and which portended equally miraculous feats when applied to political and social life. The nineteenth century was indeed a time for optimism, pride, and faith in man's capacity to better not only his world but himself as well. The year before his death in 1894 Jean Macé published his last book, which was entitled Philosophie de poche (Pocket Philosophy). In this curious, rambling work devoted to last thoughts, he looked back over his long life (he was born in 1815) and marvelled at the achievements that had been brought about by man's intelligence and inventiveness. One passage aptly expresses the pride and hope of the era: "This century is the greatest that humanity has had to date. I boldly give you them all to pass in review; you will not find another among them during which

BEST COPY AVAILABLE BEST COPY AVAILABLE

humanity has made such great strides; and it has not yet said its last word."(56)

One way the French child was exposed to republican ideas about social progress was through the textbooks used in the state schools. From Paul Bert (57) he could learn that though there were distinctions between the rich child and the poor child, the high and the low, and the strong and the weak, these distinctions did not really preclude equality in a democratic society. "For there is equality when all these children are able to attain the position they merit having by their work, their conduct, their intelligence, their instruction." From Gabriel Compayré(58) he could learn that capitalism was eminently defensible, that workingmen should be both patient and provident, that they could profit from mutual assistance associations, and that education was indispensable to self-improvement. From M. A. Mézières(59) he could learn that the quality of a man's labor was the measure of his value and that their common love of country should bind the rich and poor together in a fraternal union. And from Pierre Laloi(60) (Ernest Lavisse) the student could learn the rewards of hard work, that self-interest was a basic human motive, and that it was advantageous to stay on the farm. Concerning this last point the author bluntly stated the prevalent bias in favor of a rural life-style:

> The man who cultivates his own field is independent; he breathes clean air; he can marry young; his children are healthy and cost little to raise. Work is always plentiful. The worker in the town has to depend on a boss; he often breathes polluted air; marriage and a family are a burden to him. There are often strikes and sometimes unemployment.

All told, the school literature faithfully conveyed the republican social perspective: The republic was a milestone in the march of humanity. It would sweep away many of the

---

(56) Jean Macé, Philosophie de poche (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1893), p. 134.

(57) Paul Bert, L'Instruction civique à l'école (Paris: Picard-Bernheim, 1882), pp. 120-125.

(58) Gabriel Compayré, Eléments d'éducation civique et morale (Paris: P. Garcet, Nisius, 1880), pp. 173-185.

(59) M. A. Mézières, Education morale et instruction civique (Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1883), pp. 59, 134-136.

(60) Pierre Laloi [Ernest Lavisse], La première année d'instruction civique (Paris: Armand Colin, 1880), pp. 44, 48, 56-62.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

obstacles to progress, point the emancipated citizen toward the light, and help him on his way. Even if these steps did not constitute a guarantee of personal success, they nevertheless represented a contribution to human welfare that was far greater than that made by any other regime in the history of France.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Chapter III

MORAL EDUCATION AND LAICISM

Church-state relations form a bulky chapter in the history of the early Third Republic. The anticlericalism of the republicans, the effort to divorce morality from religion, and the meaning of the term laicism were topics that were heatedly debated at the time. They still give rise to varying interpretations. Although it has been maintained that the church-state controversy was exaggerated and that it diverted public attention from more important political and social matters,(1) the sincerity of those who led the fight against clericalism cannot be doubted. In their opinion they were not only combatting an enemy of the republic, they were contending for the very soul of the nation as well.

Many republicans were wary of the church because they saw it as a political institution bent on subverting the republic. This suspicion did not seem groundless at a time when the temporal power of the papacy was still actively defended. The presumed political pretensions of the church were the basis of clericalism. Gambetta claimed that the clerical goals were nothing less than "the conquest of the state and the direction of the masses."(2) According to him, the "clerical spirit" had been at the heart of all the coalitions against the republic since 1871.(3) Religion was a façade that masked the operations of "a political faction."(4) Ferry agreed with this position. He was careful to emphasize the political nature of anticlericalism in his public pronouncements. The attack on the church was not an attack on religion: "Yes, we wanted an anticlerical

---

(1) E. Beau de Loménie, Les responsabilités des dynasties bourgeoises, Vol. 2: De Mac-Mahon à Poincaré (Paris: Denoël, 1947), pp. 39-58.

(2) Joseph Reinach, ed., Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta (11 vols.; Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881-1885), VI, 345.

(3) Ibid., V, 174.

(4) Ibid., VI, 331.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

fight, but an antireligious fight . . . Never! Never!"(5) The positivist philosopher Emile Littré was more tolerant than Ferry or Gambetta, yet he, too, did not doubt that the church would welcome the fall of the republic and that it abetted the enemies of the regime.(6)

In his preface to a collection of Paul Bert's speeches, A. Aulard defined clericalism in a way that would have been satisfactory to Bert and other republican spokesmen. He wrote that the Roman Church was "a vast political and social association . . . that aspires to substitute its mystical principles and its infallible and capricious authority for the rational principles on which our French society rests, and to govern this society as it would like to govern all other human societies."(7) Clericalism was thus an ideological menace as much as, if not more than, a direct political threat. The church stood for principles and ideals that were contrary to those of the Great Revolution and the republican state. Opposition to the church was therefore a measure of defense in behalf of the "modern" society that was proclaimed in 1789.

The conflict was frequently described as being between two spirits. Ferry pitted the lay spirit of the republic against the theocratic spirit of the church.(8) Gambetta merged clericalism and monarchism and referred to the May 16 crisis as a struggle between those who clung to the values of the old order and the "agents of Roman theocracy," on the one hand, and "the sons of '89," on the other.(9) Jean Macé saw two opposing world views, while Eugène Spuller and Littré analyzed the issue in terms of the antagonism between science and theology.(10) The controversy could indeed be looked at

---

(5) Paul Robiquet, ed., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry (7 vols.; Paris: Armand Colin, 1893-1898), IV, 144-145.

(6) Emile Littré, Par quelle conduite la république française peut-elle consolider le succès qu'elle a obtenu? (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1879), p. 8.

(7) Paul Bert, Le cléricalisme (Paris: Armand Colin, 1900), p. vi.

(8) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 353.

(9) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VII, 54.

(10) Jean Macé, Les idées de Jean-François, Vol. 1: La séparation de l'église et de l'école (Paris: Emmanuel Vauchez, 1872), p. 42; Eugène Spuller, Education de la démocratie (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1892), pp. 48-49; Emile Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république (Paris: Aux bureaux de la Philosophie positive, 1880), pp. 379-380.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

from many angles. Where the church emphasized faith, the republic stressed reason. Where the church held to supernatural authority, the republic, or at least its leadership, paid hommage to the authority of science. Where the church and its monarchical allies represented hierarchies with power emanating from the top, the republic was pledged to democracy and equality. And where the church sought allegiance on an international scale, the republic was devoted to fostering national unity and love of country.

These differences were real enough and were bound to trouble relations between ecclesiastical and civil authorities. But the difficulties were compounded by emotionalism and zealotry. In both camps there were partisans who saw things only in terms of black and white, who readily confused the issues, and who attributed every obstacle and objection to their views to the machinations of the other side. Fanaticism unfortunately has a way of exacerbating disputes. It further clouds what might already be a complicated situation and it allows dissension to drag on without resolution. The church-state controversy was unavoidable at the time, but it suffered from the excessive enthusiasm of some of its participants.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Anticlericals found an almost inexhaustible supply of ammunition for their rhetorical guns in the Syllabus of Errors and the accompanying papal encyclical, issued from Rome in December, 1864. The Syllabus was a remarkable document which reflected what has been called the medieval attitude of the papacy toward modern society. It listed some 80 errors of the age, condemned basic values and assumptions of the republic, and reasserted sweeping prerogatives of the church. J. B. Bury's summary of the encyclical conveys the nature and tone of these pronouncements:

> The positive principles which it asserts by means of condemning their negations may be summed up thus: The State must recognise a particular religion as regnant, and submit to its influence, and this religion must be Catholic; the power of the State must be at its disposal, and all who do not conform to its requirements must be compelled or punished. The duty of governments is to protect the Church, and freedom of conscience and cult is madness. Not the popular will, but religion, that is the papal authority, is the basis of civil society, otherwise it will sink into materialism. The Church is superior to the State, and therefore the State has no right to dictate to her, and has no power over religious orders. The family and the education of children belong

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> to the Church, not to the State. The Pope can decree and prescribe what he chooses without the State's permission, and his authority is not limited to doctrines and morals.(11)

The Syllabus expounded these ideas and additionally placed science and philosophy under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, refused to accept that morality could dispense with divine sanction, and, in its last thesis, affirmed that "the Roman pontiff cannot, and ought not to, reconcile himself and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation."(12)

Bury made two interesting points in interpreting the Syllabus.(13) He argued that the document was largely for internal consumption in that it was an attempt by ultramontane clerics to recall to the true path their more liberal colleagues in France and Germany who were disposed to accept that "liberalism and modern constitutional liberties were good in themselves." Further, he pointed out that although the principles expressed in the Syllabus were indeed held to be valid by the church, the papacy recognized that they could not be implemented under present circumstances and that compromises with civil authorities, like the Concordat of 1801 with France, were inescapable.

This distinction between the ideal and the practical, the desirable and the possible, was sometimes overlooked by French anticlericals. In making their case against the church, they did not always distinguish between aspiration and power. They tended to convey the impression that because ultramontane clerics would have liked to achieve a particular end, they therefore were capable of attaining that end and were prepared to take every step in that direction.

The Jesuits were considered the vanguard of ultramontanism in France. The Society of Jesus was an especial irritant to the republicans because of its renowned discipline and devotion to Rome. Further it had not been authorized to operate in France and, as part of the regular clergy, it was not subject to episcopal control. The extent of the enmity toward the Jesuits was clearly shown in

---

(11) J. B. Bury, History of the Papacy in the 19th Century (1930; reprint ed.; New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 8.

(12) Ibid., pp. 16, 34, 40.

(13) Ibid., pp. 42-44.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1880 when the government moved against the unauthorized congregations. All of these orders were granted a grace period in which to seek legal recognition except the Jesuits who were summarily dissolved.

For Jules Ferry, who was a key figure in the attack on the Jesuits, the Society was an evil anachronism. Next to the national flag representing liberalism and republicanism, the Jesuits raised the standard of counterrevolution.(14) They were "the soul" of the opposition to the republic and had a network of agents at work throughout the country.(15) He reported to the Chamber in June of 1879 that certain texts used in Jesuit schools were full of "detestable tendencies" and were inspired by a "spirit of hostility against all that constitutes the tradition of the French Revolution, against the modern State, our institutions, our laws, our society, against all these great things."(16)

To a generation of republican politicians that placed great faith in education to create national unity, fashion intelligent citizens, and resolve social and economic problems, the instructional mission of the Jesuits was an intolerable thorn in the flesh. Democracy protected liberty but, in Ferry's opinion, it could not abide establishments wherein one learned "to curse all the ideas which are the honor and the raison d'être of modern France."(17) What was particularly galling was the fact that the number of Jesuits and their schools was increasing. Ferry calculated that in 1845 there were only 200 members of the order in France. By 1861 this figure had risen to 1085 and by 1879 it had climbed to 1509. In 1865 the order had 14 secondary schools in the country with 5074 students. In 1876 there were 27 such schools with a total enrollment of 9131.(18) And what was even more disturbing was that the doctrines of clericalism and the teachings of the Jesuits seemed to be making the greatest inroads among the bourgeoisie.(19) This situation was totally unacceptable. The infiltration of clerical ideals among what Gambetta called "the governing classes" meant that the minions of Rome could count on "if not the connivance, at least the complaisance of a great number of state functionaries."(20) Ferry therefore made no effort to conceal his intention to remove French youth

---

(14) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 57.
(15) Ibid., III, 139-140.
(16) Ibid., III, 101.
(17) Ibid., III, 57-58.
(18) Ibid., III, 86-88.
(19) Ibid., III, 125.
(20) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VI, 342-343.

from the taint of Jesuitical education.(21) Failure to do so would perpetuate irreconcilable divisions and would sooner or later consecrate a new liberty, the liberty of civil war.

Despite protestations to the contrary, criticism of the church along political and ideological lines could not be separated from criticism of religion. Many prominent republicans did not find religion a significant influence in life. Gambetta, Ferry, Bert, Clemenceau, and Littré were freethinkers. (Ferry supposedly confided in the socialist Jean Jaurès that his goal was "'to organize humanity without God and without king.'")(22) Buisson, Steeg, and Pécaut were extremely liberal Protestants. Large areas of the country at that time have been referred to as zones of religious indifference. Decreased participation in church rites, an increase in the number of civil marriages and burials, and contemporary reports of dwindling religiosity have been cited as evidence of déchristianisation.(23) No precise measure of the decline in religious sentiment can be given and unquestionably the vast majority of Frenchmen still formally adhered to the church. Nevertheless it may be asserted that the traditional sway of Catholicism was being challenged and that there were noticeable and significant pockets of unbelief, especially in the higher reaches of the republican hierarchy.

Several reasons for the falling away from religion may be adduced. The apparent close identification of the church with political reactionaries, the global denunciation of "modern" ideas contained in the Syllabus, and the proclamation of papal infallibility in 1870 made it difficult to harmonize the tenets of the faith with the secular ideals of society. The acceptance of one belief system implied the rejection of the other. For many thoughtful persons, maintaining the faith no longer seemed relevant. Catholicism was now an obscurantist influence; the church spoke for an

---

(21) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 57.

(22) Cited in Louis Capéran, Histoire contemporaine de la laïcité française, Vol. 1: La crise du seize mai et la revanche républicaine (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1957), p. 12.

(23) See Jacques Chastenet, Histoire de la troisième république, Vol. 2: La république des républicains, 1879-1893 (Paris: Hachette, 1954), pp. 9-25; Jean-Marie Mayeur, François Bédarida, Antoine Prost, and Jean-Louis Monneron, Histoire du peuple français: cent ans d'esprit républicain (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie de France, 1964), pp. 159-162.

age thankfully long past. Science, on the other hand, stood for progress and improvement. Its revelations cast doubt on inherited assumptions and its technological marvels promised a better life for all. Man's reason and intelligence appeared to be sufficient to cope with almost every eventuality. In sloughing off religion and supernaturalism of all varieties was man really letting go of something of vital importance? Was he not merely discarding a quaint vestige of a less enlightened past? Had not Auguste Comte, whose ideas shaped the thinking of Gambetta, Ferry, and others of their circle, (24) charted the movement from the theological age, through the metaphysical age, to the age of positivism that was now dawning? In a word, could not man stand unaided on his own two feet and revere only the continuing accomplishments of Humanity?

The republicans were not of one mind concerning how far to push their anticlericalism. Opinions divided over whether the Concordat of 1801 should be retained. This agreement between Napoléon I and Pope Pius VII laid the basis for church-state relations in the post-revolutionary period. Catholicism was recognized as the dominant religious denomination in the country and the right to practice the faith with a minimum of state interference was assured. Bishops were named by the government and invested by the papacy. Parish priests were appointed by the bishops subject to state confirmation. The pope renounced his claim to church property that had been nationalized during the revolution and, in return, the state agreed to pay the salaries of bishops and priests. No mention was made of the regular clergy and this omission left unclarified the status of the religious orders.

Radicals like Clemenceau favored an immediate separation of church and state.(25) They maintained that retention of a special relationship with the church was contrary to republican dogma. Further it was absurd, in their opinion, for the state to pay the wages of those who had proved themselves to be enemies of the regime. The opportunist republicans, on the other hand, felt that the contract with the church should be respected, at least for the time

---

(24) See Louis Legrand, L'Influence du positivisme dans l'oeuvre scolaire de Jules Ferry (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1961).

(25) Georges Clemenceau, "Speech of April 11, 1880, at the Cirque Fernando," La Justice, April 13, 1880, p. 2.

being.(26) Revocation of the Concordat would be a decisive break with tradition that might needlessly disturb the consciences of the faithful. Additionally, it was argued that the current arrangement permitted the state a measure of control over the church that would be lacking if separation were to take place. In any event the ultimate resolution of the issue could be predicted. The "scientific" study of the laws of human evolution pointed to the progressive secularization of society.(27) Why push the inevitable? The day when the formal ties between church and state could be effortlessly severed would come of its own accord.

Radicals and moderates had no trouble, however, coming to terms on the necessity of secularizing public education. If the school was charged with the responsibility of remaking "the national soul," to use Ferry's expression, (28) in accord with the ideals of the revolution and democracy, then contrary influences would have to be driven from the classroom. This proposition was far from new. Since the time of Condorcet--whose educational ideas had a great impact on Ferry (29)--republican thinkers and publicists had repeatedly averred that the public school could not loyally serve two masters.

By the late 1870's the republicans felt secure enough to begin to take action on the longstanding program of secularization. The law of February 27, 1880, reorganized the central and regional agencies for educational administration, the Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique and the conseils académiques, and removed representatives of the so-called "great social influences," including the church, from their memberships. In the same year the exclusive right of the state to grant degrees was restored (March 18) and the Jesuits were proscribed (March 29). The law of March 28, 1882, secularized the curriculum of the public primary schools and prohibited religious observances therein. Finally, article 17 of the law of October 30, 1886, secularized the instructional personnel by withdrawing

---

(26) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 190, 390; Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, VI, 345, 348, 351; Léon Dubreuil, Paul Bert (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1935), p. 122.

(27) Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république, pp. 393-399; Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VII, 22-25.

(28) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VII, 230-231.

(29) Ibid., I, 283-305.

the right of clerics to teach in state elementary schools.(30)

These measures were opposed, as a whole or in part, not only by ecclesiastics and monarchists but also by liberals and spiritualist republicans, such as the former minister of public instruction and premier, Jules Simon, who believed that the state was going too far in its effort to chase God out of the schools. Critics turned the democratic ideal of liberty against the proponents of this legislation. They argued that the freedom to offer instruction (liberté de l'enseignement), the freedom of the parent to educate his children as he saw fit, and the freedom of religion were being denied. The republic's much-touted claim to stand four-square for liberty seemed to have a hollow ring about it.

Furthermore it was impossible for some people, including lay teachers, to suppress the suspicion that anticlericalism was merely a subterfuge. The true ambition of those in power, it was feared, was to implant in the educational system their own pet doctrines and to see to it that only these doctrines were propagated in the schools. The foundation of the old Université--that monopolistic educational corporation created by Napoléon I and subservient to him--appeared to be undergoing renovation. One of the pedagogical reviews, L'Ecole nouvelle, succinctly expressed this concern in 1879:

> Whether one examines the projects of Paul Bert or those of Ferry, the same tendency toward authoritarian Republic, centralized government, [or] strong power is revealed.
>
> The more or less veiled goal is the reconstitution of a Université, that is to say, of a lay teaching corps directed by the State, a kind of Church in which the minister or grand master would be the pontiff, and where the unity of doctrines would be guaranteed by the examinations, by the assigned texts, [and] by the tightly structured hierarchy. As a pretext, one would pretend to oppose this lay Church to the other without see-

---

(30) For a discussion of the entire republican program of secularization see Evelyn M. Acomb, The French Laic Laws, 1879-1889 (1931; reprint ed.; New York: Octagon Books, 1967).

ing that science and liberty would lose everything and that progress would gain nothing.(31)

A teacher identified only by the initial "L" wrote La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices in 1885 to complain about how the governmental majorities had abused their power in making public education an instrument of propaganda.(32) What went on in the schools was far removed, in his opinion, from the principles of the revolution and from anything approaching intellectual criticism: "All that we really are aware of is authoritarian and intolerant dogmatism." Another instructor declared in the same publication that the law of March 28, 1882, had overshot the mark.(33) It had failed to take into account the fact that for two-thirds of the families in France the priest was still "the preponderant power." Doing away with all classroom religious exercises, he suggested, would lead many to abandon the public schools in favor of private religious institutions.

Replying to these objections forced republican spokesmen to delimit some of their ideals. Whether their retorts were judged to be adequate depended, on occasion, on one's tolerance for refined qualifications and subtle distinctions.

The objection that secularization trammeled the freedom of religion was countered with the argument that disallowing religious observances in the schools protected the individual's freedom of conscience. Catholics might find it perfectly admissible for their children to go to Mass on school time, but what about the children of Protestants and nonbelievers? Was it not unfair to subject them to denominational practices and creeds with which their parents might disagree? The fact that school attendance was made mandatory in 1882 strengthened this position. Compulsory education could not be permitted to entail compulsory religion. The teacher's rights were involved, too. His freedom of conscience should not be violated by requiring him to lead and participate in the profession of a catechism for which he perhaps had little sympathy. In this situation the best way to respect the rights of all concerned was to separate cleanly the functions of the cleric from those of the teacher. Spiritual cultivation would in no way be hindered. Article two of the law of March 28, 1882, generously stipu-

---

(31) L'Ecole nouvelle, June-July, 1879, p. 5.
(32) La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices, April 15, 1885, p. 125.
(33) Ibid., May 15, 1885, p. 147.

lated that the public primary schools would be dismissed one day a week, in addition to Sunday, "in order to permit parents, if they so desire, to have religious instruction given to their children outside of the school buildings."(34)

From the start of his political career Paul Bert had maintained that the secularization of the school would be a conquest for freedom--the freedom of the parent, of the teacher, and of the child.(35) But what about the freedom of the church to continue its age-old educational vocation, primarily through the teaching orders? Bert unabashedly backtracked at this point. To him the church's demand for liberty was a sham. Freedom for the church meant the freedom to dominate, to destroy the rights of others.(36) His attitude toward the regular clergy, especially the Jesuits, was as uncompromising as it was extreme. The Society of Jesus, for example, was a double threat; it could strike from the left as well as from the right. He long railed against the Jesuits for their political reactionarism. But he also claimed that it was possible for them to constitute an even greater menace by becoming republicans, or worse yet, "demagogues, socialists, or communists."(37)

According to Aulard, Bert judged the teaching of the congregations to be irrational, immoral, and unpatriotic. It represented "a permanent conspiracy of the spirit of the past against the spirit of the future."(38) Gambetta tended to agree insofar as he felt that clerics were not good teachers because they were out of touch with the ideas of the modern world.(39) Years later, at the turn of the century, Ferdinand Buisson was to elaborate on this theme. During the second clerical campaign, which culminated in the separation of church and state in 1905, Buisson blandly explained that opposition to the teaching of the orders was not based on vindictiveness or partisanship but on the awareness that clerics did not possess the competence to be instructors:

> The priest--and still more the monk--is a man of faith; the teacher is a man of reason. . . . To

---

(34) Journal officiel de la république française, March 29, 1882, p. 2.
(35) Paul Bert, Leçons, discours et conférences (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881), pp. 161, 377.
(36) Bert, Le cléricalisme, p. 295.
(37) Ibid., pp. 248-249.
(38) Ibid., pp. vii-viii.
(39) Reinach, ed., Discours de Gambetta, III, 40-41.

> undertake to be a teacher is to undertake to think freely and to make others do likewise. It is to promise to awaken and to exercise the sense of criticism, the habit of discussion, the spirit of inquiry without limit and without reserve. It is to declare that whatever be the truth one will accept it when science makes it shine forth, even though it might overthrow all received theories.
>
> Can one maintain that this state of mind is that of a priest, of a monk, [or] of a nun?(40)

Prohibiting the religious orders from teaching was therefore proposed. Bert favored the idea and squared such a prohibition with liberty. Because of the authoritarianism of the church and the perversity of some of its doctrines--doctrines which atrophied and deformed the mind--depriving the congregations of the right to teach would, in effect, strike a blow for the freedom of conscience.(41) Radicals supported this proposal and some of them wanted to carry it one step further. One of their number, Madier de Montjau, sought in 1879 to amend a higher education bill so that all clerics, secular as well as regular, would be barred from teaching. Although sweeping, this amendment offered a clear-cut, logical response to the allegation that ecclesiastics were corrupting the young.

But Ferry demurred. The then minister of public instruction argued that the proposition greatly exceeded the current state of public sentiment and risked being construed as a direct assault by the government on religion in general.(42) Whatever his private views on the church, Ferry was not prepared to endorse a policy that, in his opinion, might precipitate a religious war from which neither side could emerge victorious. Instead he tried to keep attention focused steadily on the Jesuits whose expulsion, he anticipated, would satisfy an important anticlerical demand without unduly distressing the Catholic rank and file.

This strategy rested on the proper assumption that Catholic opinion was not homogeneous. Ferry did not believe that the other orders, the secular clergy, and the majority of laymen approved of Jesuitical doctrines.(43) In fact he agreed with Littré, whose article on the sub-

---

(40) Ferdinand Buisson, La foi laïque (2nd ed.; Paris: Hachette, 1913), pp. 114-115.
(41) Bert, Le cléricalisme, pp. viii-ix.
(42) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 178-191.
(43) Ibid., III, 135-137.

ject he cited, that most French Catholics compartmentalized their political and religious behaviors. The practice of their faith did not predetermine their political decisions. In making the latter they joined with Jews, Protestants, and freethinkers in respecting "the essential conditions of modern society as it has been fashioned by the revolution." (44) The extreme left and the extreme right made a serious mistake in overlooking this sociological fact.(45)

Ferry's anticlericalism was strong but it was more calculated than that of some of his associates. As a good opportunist, he preferred to move toward his goal with as much caution as determination. Albeit Madier de Montjau's amendment was voted down, the right of clerics to teach continued to be an issue for republicans. As far as public primary education was concerned, the right was denied in 1886 but it was not until 1904 that the right of the regular clergy to teach at all was formally withdrawn.

Republicans vouchsafed parental rights in education although they did not consider them inviolable. The father could not, for example, allow his child to remain in ignorance. "Under no circumstances," stated Buisson in 1883, "does anyone have the right to make a little pariah out of a young Frenchman." The right to learning was a natural right that no family could impeach.(46) Ferry concurred with this view and extended the restriction to cover miseducation. The parent could not condone, in the name of freedom, instruction dangerous "to the preservation of the state."(47) Like Bert, he put forth the dubious argument that the government of the republic would not be worthy of its name if it did not guard the child against pernicious ideas that could corrode his mind and render him incapable of independent thought.(48) On the other hand, the home was a privileged place. Within its confines the parent was free to direct his offspring as he deemed best. But this liberty was not transferable. Once the parent sought to delegate his instructional prerogative to any agency outside the home, the state was entitled to invoke its right of surveillance.(49)

---

(44) Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république, pp. 489-508.
(45) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, VI, 12-37.
(46) Buisson, La foi laïque, p. 17.
(47) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, III, 67.
(48) Ibid., III, 404.
(49) Ibid., III, 55.

This was justifiable in part because, according to Ferry, private citizens were not necessarily competent to judge educational quality. During a debate on the bill to require certification of both public and private primary schoolteachers (law of June 16, 1881), the royalist Emile Keller expressed the conviction that the operation of the free market would maintain educational standards. Bad schools would be boycotted whereas good ones--even if they were staffed with personnel that did not happen to possess state certificates--would win the confidence of the public. Ferry contested the premise of this argument in no uncertain terms:

> This thesis consists in saying that education is an industry just like any other, that it is a private enterprise, and that the consumer is the sole judge of the quality of the product.
>
> Well, sirs, as for me, as for the government in whose name I speak, we will never admit this theory, we will always combat it. . . . Never will we recognize that the education of the people is a private industry; . . . never will we admit that those who teach can have either the freedom to be ignorant or the freedom to poison.(50)

Thus did the education minister reaffirm the public nature of instruction and the ultimate competence of the state to assess the suitability of the schooling given to the young.

The confusion over the meaning of school secularization and its implications for liberty was compounded by the ambiguity of the term laïcité. For most republicans, the revolution, democracy, and laicism were elements of a trinity. The republican state was lay in its essence and in its agencies. This had been "the principal work, the great care, the grand passion, and the great service" of the revolution.(51) Laicism was a doctrine but it was also an unmistakable part of the historical evolution of society. First, men like Descartes and Bacon secularized knowledge and philosophy. Then the revolution secularized the civil power. Therefore the secularization of the school was not so much a partisan policy as it was yet another logical step in an inexorable historical movement. The consequences of this movement were liberating. Laicism freed the mind and conscience and it rendered the state

---

(50) Ibid., III, 535-536.
(51) Ibid., II, 254.

sovereign and independent of clerical tutelage.(52)

From one point of view laïcité could be defined as *nothing more than the end* product of anticlericalism, that is, the neutral state of affairs that resulted from eliminating clerical control of an institution like the government or the school. From another point of view, however, laïcité could be interpreted as embracing positive doctrines that were intended to supplant those which it eradicated. In this second sense, secularization did not imply strict neutrality.

As there were clerics who defined liberty in a questionable manner, it must be admitted that there were republicans who handled the term laïcité in a way that allowed for more than one interpretation. Such imprecision was the heart of much fruitless wrangling between republicans and their opponents. What the French call a dialogue des sourds (dialogue of the deaf) took place. Neither side accepted that the words of the other accurately conveyed the full meaning behind them. Each accused the other of intentional obfuscation and of deviousness. Republicans suspected that the ecclesiastical demand for liberté de l'enseignement was a strategic maneuver that would be quickly abandoned if and when the church were in a position to impose its will. The opposition, on the other hand, feared that the republican stress on the liberating quality of laïcité was a smoke screen for the covert implantation of antireligious principles.

In November of 1905 Ferdinand Buisson, who had been Ferry's closest collaborator on school reform, (53) spoke at the closing session of the congress of the Ligue de l'enseignement. In response to the continuing allegation by the church that republican schools were expounding ideas injurious to the faith, he drew an important distinction between neutrality and laïcité. The former implied the complete absence of a point of view. The latter, however, did imply a point of view--one which the teacher was obliged to defend:

> . . . one must define the word "neutral" by the word "lay." The school is not neutral purely and simply [tout court]; it is [neutral] in the measure that it can be while remaining lay in

---

(52) Ibid., IV, 124-125.

(53) Mona Ozouf, L'Ecole, l'église et la république, 1871-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), p. 278.

> spirit, lay in method, [and] lay in doctrine. . . . The school is truly an instrument of progress: it then has an opinion, a tendency; . . . it will always express something, it will always inspire something, namely, at least the love of the Republic and respect for the sovereignty of Reason.(54)

This statement does not fully describe the compass of the tendency of the lay school. But it does clearly indicate that in Buisson's opinion laïcité went beyond anticlericalism and represented positive ideas that were cherished by the republican leadership. It also testifies to the difficulty of clearly demarcating the respective spheres of politics and religion. As long as many republicans indiscriminately commingled democracy, the revolution, progress, science, reason, and faith in humanity, and as long as many clerics believed that the church should, by divine right, have a privileged role in shaping the general outlook of society, serious clashes between the so-called temporal and spiritual realms were unavoidable.

In his study of French laicism during the period under investigation, Louis Capéran agreed that the term incorporated a positive as well as a negative sense. A passage in the introduction to the first volume of his work aptly conveys the nature of this positive aspect:

> When politicians, philosophers, pedagogues, and teachers embrace their lay ideal as a faith, they want this faith above all to be entirely emancipated, but they also dream and claim that it is both liberating and constructive. In their thought, man is free and sovereign; humanity must govern itself by its own laws derived from its nature and its history; [and] men, definitively freed by science, have to assure the happiness of society and the unlimited progress of culture and civilization by their own providence, by an appropriate education of children and of youth, [and] by the aggregate force of joint cooperation.(55)

There have been two broad interpretations of the conception of laïcité of the primary school legislation's chief architect, Jules Ferry. One holds that he was not intolerant of religion, that his anticlericalism was purely poli-

---

(54) Buisson, La foi laïque, p. 212.

(55) Capéran, La crise du seize mai et la revanche républicaine, p. xxv.

tical.(56) The other accepts that his laicism had an ideological aspect and that he promoted a "secular religion." (57) The difference lies again in where one draws the line between politics and religion. The more that is considered appropriate to politics, the easier it is to claim that laïcité is solely a measure of defense for the civil power.

Ferry maintained that the republic should be neutral with respect to confessional creeds and philosophies. Political neutrality was another matter. The state had certain social, governmental, and political doctrines to protect. These derived from the revolution and no one could prevent republicans from declaring that "the social state which the revolution of 1789 founded is far superior to that which preceded it."(58)

It was therefore impossible to presume complete state neutrality in education. Republican society empowered the government, its elected agent, to supervise schooling. Those in authority were charged to stand watch against "doctrinal anarchy" and to assure intellectual and moral quality. The execution of these responsibilities did not signify the restoration of the Napoleonic Université. The imperial monopole had served a despot; the republican educational system served democracy.(59)

Government safeguards, moreover, did not destroy liberté de l'enseignement. Private schools were allowed. But Ferry distinguished two types of liberty. The first included "essential freedoms," like the freedoms to think, to write, and to petition. These were natural rights possessed by all. The freedom to teach, however, was a civil liberty. This meant that it was not fundamental and that it was subordinate to the public interest. He firmly subscribed to the position Adolphe Thiers stated in an 1844 report whereby diversity in education should not be taken to mean that one could make "'bad citizens, citizens of another time, of another country, of another constitution,

---

(56) Charles de Freycinet, Souvenirs, 1878-1893 (7th ed.; Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1913), pp. 482-483; Alfred Rambaud, Jules Ferry (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1903), p. 129.

(57) Jean Dietz, "Jules Ferry et les traditions républicaines," Revue politique et parlementaire, CLX (July, 1934), p. 105; Maurice Reclus, Jules Ferry (Paris: Flammarion, 1947), p. 175.

(58) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, IV, 363.

(59) Ibid., II, 247-253; III, 567-568.

citizens that one will have raised to believe that the French Revolution was one long crime.'"(60)

One of the major concerns of the nineteenth century was establishing a basis for moral unity. The Enlightenment had been a time of probing criticism; it had undermined Christianity and had proclaimed tolerance for differing beliefs. After the upheaval of the revolution, however, there was a search for a new moral synthesis that would rise above party strife and class conflict and provide a common moral union. Some efforts in this direction were cloaked with religious trappings but at base they sought to reorganize society through "a new morality adapted to the new form of modern societies."(61)

The events of 1870-1871 made the need for moral order and stability more urgent. In a letter of April 15, 1871, Ferry expressed the disillusionment and depression felt by many:

> Class hatred, the division of souls, egoism and lust, the collapse and poisoning of moral rectitude, the absence of all public virtue, the spirit of discord and the passion of envy, with a lot of cowardice tying together the whole, will make of us not a people, but a hell, a Poland more foolish and tragic than the real one and not less justly punished.(62)

It is therefore not surprising that national unity built upon a common morality should have been one of the first cares of republicans. Remaking the "national soul" was a basic necessity for Gambetta, Ferry, and others. That the school should be the primary locus for moral regeneration was easily accepted because only there could be found "the sphere of the most unselfish and the most noble ideas."(63)

But was it really possible to teach morality without any reference to religion? Many people said no unhesitatingly. But there were substantial reasons for trying to convince them otherwise. If Godlessness by definition im-

---

(60) Ibid., III, 64-68.

(61) Albert Bayet and François Albert, Les écrivains politiques du XIX^{e} siècle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1904), pp. 13-16.

(62) Jules Ferry, Lettres de Jules Ferry, 1846-1893 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1914), pp. 106-109.

(63) Spuller, Education de la démocratie, p. 26.

plied amorality, freethinkers would be embarrassed, the secularization program would be untenable, and the hope to unify the nation morally would be vain. Besides, arguments from intellectual authorities could be cited to support the proposition that morality did not require theological or metaphysical underpinnings or, at least, that it could stand apart from the dogma of Catholicism. The thinkers whose ideas were referred to included Condorcet, Kant, Spencer, and Comte. Freemasonry and liberal Protestantism contributed a vague Deism. Studies of these influences are most beneficial but it must be remembered that republican reformers were chiefly politicians, not philosophers.(64) They were not loath to borrow, from a variety of sources, ideas that supported their policies.

Morality was for Ferry a fact independent of metaphysics and theology; it "is a social fact that carries in itself its beginning and its end."(65) The human conscience was the basis of morality:

> . . . as long as humanity will exist, there will be morality, a morality marching with humanity and progressing with it, because morality has a basis that is founded on the human conscience and not on the reveries of men's brains.(66)

Since morals were a social fact they could be studied scientifically just like other natural phenomena. Positivism was attempting to do this.(67) Scientific morality, unlike those which were supposedly a priori or divinely revealed, proceeded by the observation of facts, their generalization, and the rational testing of received ideas.(68)

Whether the conscience was fixed or changing was not clear. Paul Bert and Gabriel Compayré believed that the laws of the conscience were immutable; they applied to all

---

(64) Gambetta, for example, swore allegiance to positivism but there is some doubt about how much of Comte he actually read (Joseph Reinach, La vie politique de Léon Gambetta (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1918), pp. 200-205).

(65) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, II, 194.

(66) Ibid., IV, 29.

(67) Ibid., IV, 30.

(68) La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices, November 1, 1886, p. 320.

peoples, at all times, in all places.(69) Ferry, Littré, and Buisson posited the evolution of moral verities.(70) For them, as humanity progressed so would the rules governing its conduct.

The influence of Kant's thought can be seen in the emphasis some placed on duty. Jules Steeg is a good example. In one of his texts he stated that of all the laws in the conscience the law of duty was foremost.(71) Its message was clear and unambiguous, it never varied, and it had to be obeyed for itself without consideration of personal interest. Léaud and Glay, in their history of the French primary school, maintained that it was unnecessary to inquire into the kinds of duty. Duty was simply duty. It was dictated by reason and could spring up as a "cry from the heart."(72)

Protestantism and Deism were compromises for persons who opposed Catholicism but were reluctant to dismiss the Supreme Being. As Ernest Renan put it, "Beliefs in the supernatural are like a poison which kills if too large a dose is taken. Protestantism mixes a certain quantity of them in its brew, but the proportion is weak and thus becomes benign."(73) A liberal form of Protestantism, one that preserved Christian morality yet did not hold to firm dogma, miracles, and an authoritative priesthood, could provide a "juste milieu" between obscurantist religion, on the one hand, and materialism, on the other. Buisson had proposed in the 1860's a Union of Liberal Christianity that would be open to all men of good will, including atheists.(74) Jean Macé believed that man was religious by nature and he found republican and Christian principles to be similar. Consequently, he, too, supported the idea of a religion that imposed no dogma and which sprang from the

---

(69) Bert, Le cléricalisme, p. 200; Gabriel Compayré, Eléments d'éducation civique et morale (Paris: P. Garcet, Nisius, 1880), p. 105.

(70) Littré, De l'établissement de la troisième république, p. 374; Buisson, La foi laïque, p. 238.

(71) Jules Steeg, Instruction morale et civique (Paris: N. Fauvé et F. Nathan, 1882), pp. 26-37.

(72) Alexis Léaud and Emile Glay, L'Ecole primaire en France (2 vols.; Paris: La Cité française, 1934), II, 115.

(73) Cited in Chastenet, La république des républicains, 1879-1893, p. 16.

(74) Capéran, La crise du seize mai et la revanche républicaine, pp. 12-20.

heart rather than from the head.(75) Thus whereas some professed to be able to dispense with any supernatural basis for morals, others could not. Nevertheless there was a common element in the search for the fundament of morality and that was the effort to extricate the determination of right and wrong from the exclusive jurisdiction of the Catholic Church.

In order to calm the passions aroused by the school secularization bill and facilitate its passage, Ferry pursued a conciliatory line. He told the Senate that, despite all the furor over the question, the public schoolteacher would not mention the basis of morality at all but would confine himself to teaching morals directly. The morality he had in mind was "the good old morality of our fathers, ours and yours, for we only have one":(76)

> It will be a matter of the old precepts that we all learned from our mothers and fathers when we were children. It will be a matter of respect for parents, of obedience to parents; it will be a matter of the numerous applications of this precept which fully sums up the eternal morality: "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you."(77)

Moreover, Ferry promised that should a teacher overstep the bounds set for him and belittle the religious beliefs of any of his students, he would be severely reprimanded just as if he had been guilty of physically mistreating a pupil.(78)

He repeated these injunctions, after the law was enacted, in his circular to the teaching personnel of November 17, 1883.(79) Instructors were not to pose as philosophers or theologians. Their moral instruction was to involve nothing that went beyond what was familiar to "all upright people." They were to withhold introducing

---

(75) Jean Macé, Discours de M. Jean Macé à la séance de clôture du 4e congrès de la Ligue de l'enseignement (Paris: Imprimerie Chaix, 1884), p. 5.

(76) Robiquet, ed., Discours de Ferry, IV, 142.

(77) Ibid., IV, 179.

(78) Ibid., IV, 228.

(79) Jules Ferry, Circulaire addressée par M. le Ministre de l'instruction publique aux instituteurs, concernant l'enseignement moral et civique, November 17, 1883, reproduced in Revue pédagogique, December 15, 1883, pp. 535-543.

in their classes any maxim that any parent of good faith could not endorse.

In point of fact, after all was said and done, God was not evicted from the public school although His place there was markedly restricted. The attempt led by Jules Simon in the Senate to include duties toward God in the March 28, 1882, law was beaten back but the Conseil supérieur de l'instruction publique nevertheless permitted their insertion in the official program of studies adopted in July of the same year.(80) The program cautioned the teacher not to discuss the nature and attributes of the First Cause but instructed him to make the child respect "this notion of God" and to help him understand that he owed "obedience to the laws of God as they are revealed to him by his conscience and his reason." References to the Deity also figured in most of the textbooks pertaining to moral education. Mona Ozouf reported that a survey conducted in 1883 found that about one-third of the texts made no mention of God, one-third were deistic, and one-third were "of Catholic tendency."(81)

The idea of duty suffused the official guidelines for moral instruction. The student had duties to the family, himself, his fellows, the school, and, of course, the fatherland. Love, obedience, respect, politeness, hard work, docility, sobriety, economy, patience, etc., were obligations to be unequivocally met. Example more than precept was essential to such instruction. The student was to be made to feel the compelling call of his conscience and to respond freely without counting the cost.

The way morality was to be treated in the schools obviously failed to satisfy everyone. The attention to God was either too little or too much. Some were disappointed that the idea of a true scientific morality had been shelved. Many teachers were plainly confused.(82) For a long time they had eagerly followed the intricate discussions about the foundations of morals. Then they were told in so many words to forget it all and to confine themselves to the

---

(80) Règlements d'organisation pédagogique et programmes pour les écoles maternelles et les écoles primaires publiques as reproduced in Revue pédagogique, August 15, 1882, pp. 128-161.

(81) Ozouf, L'Ecole, L'église et la république, 1871-1914, pp. 114-115.

(82) La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices, August 15, 1886, pp. 242-244.

"good old morality of our fathers." This was disconcerting and even insulting. It seemed to some that the ministry did not feel that teachers were sufficiently gifted to probe critically the nature of the forces which guided man's conduct.

Nevertheless the teachers of the lay school helped fashion a generation of French men and women by way of lay morality. What was the result? Buisson gave a reply in 1903:

> . . . this new moral education . . . carries to the bosom of the family better than any catechism the clear notion of duty, the ideas of justice and goodness, the habit of reflection, the culture of the conscience, the sentiment of the rights of man and human dignity, and finally true patriotism, not the kind that is expressed by high-sounding phrases but the one that is translated into acts of calm fidelity to duty. That is what the lay school does and what gives us the right to say that this school is sufficient for the moral education of a nation.(83)

But in time laïcité and lay morality began to show signs of wear, or in the words of one author, a "sad nakedness."(84) The enthusiasm of the late 1870's and the 1880's started to wane. The Boulanger crisis, the Panama scandal, and the Dreyfus affair testified to the vulnerability of the new order. Teachers felt that their burdens were too great, their rewards too few. Their moral instruction could easily degenerate into pious preachments about unquestioning self-sacrifice. For many of them international socialism seemed to offer a more substantial doctrine than the one they were charged to profess. Republican doctrine was optimistic and idealistic but it had overwhelmed objections rather than answer them and its bases in places appeared to be as nebulous as the ones of those it supplanted. And finally in the holocaust that began in 1914 its optimism and idealism were put to the fiery test. As a result of this experience the old questions were posed again with a renewed urgency: Was humanity really on the road of indefinite progress? Could man truly stand alone and regulate his affairs unaided by any power beyond himself?

---

(83) Buisson, La foi laïque, p. 156.
(84) Georges Duveau, Les instituteurs (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1957), p. 124.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The founders of the republican primary school looked to education to promote order and control. The Third Republic was the sixth regime France had had since Napoléon crowned himself emperor in 1804. Ideological conflict, popular unrest, and even civil war punctuated the history of the country with alarming regularity throughout the nineteenth century. Each regime had suffered from what Denis Brogan has called "the diseases of habit, of boredom, of being something that the new generations now coming to maturity had not made for themselves, but had inherited from their fathers." Popular sovereignty *per se* was not an antidote. The people had made serious mistakes. Universal suffrage had welcomed an empire as well as a republic, and it seemed willing to embrace a king in 1871.

That republicans should turn to education in attempting to attain their ends is not surprising. No democracy worthy of the name could maintain itself by force and suppression of the popular will. Besides, these methods were not effective. More than one so-called authoritarian regime had been swept away almost overnight. But education worked on the young and pliable without violence, and it could go deeper than outward behavior and touch the soul. By propagating a common set of values and ideals and a standard appreciation of the republic--in fact, a *Weltanschauung*--the school would be a powerful agent of public tranquility and the balance wheel of popular sovereignty. The prominent place accorded to civic instruction--imbued with the republican mythology and the idea of duty--can be best understood from this perspective. Further, this perspective clarifies why education was considered a public function. The state had the right and the duty to supervise the training of the young in the name of the general interest. Hence democratic education was conservative: it sought to conserve and to perpetuate both a form of government and an ideological content.

The ideal of liberty must be interpreted within this context. Individuals and groups were free, to be sure, but their freedom was guaranteed only *within* the republican framework. No one had the right to undermine the political order. Democracy could not be used to destroy itself. And as the school texts made abundantly clear, the basic freedom

was the freedom to do what one was taught to be right. Furthermore, liberty was often treated as a negative concept. There was a tendency to contrast the current regime to previous ones in terms of black and white. In this manner the republic was portrayed as promising freedom from the evils of the past: from ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and bondage. Once these blights had been eradicated then, positively, one was free to profit from the blessings the republic held in store.

In all of this, elitism and paternalism are detectable. Democratic idealism never quite overcame a certain bourgeois condescension toward le peuple. The common folk were sovereign but they needed guidance and direction. Their will was supreme but it had to be "interpreted" and refined. The ultimate determination of good and bad, right and wrong, lay with the republican leadership, which animated the beneficent state and its agencies, including the school.

In defining their beliefs, the republicans were guilty of commingling ideals and values too freely. This practice heightened the confusion and acerbity of public debate. It also convinced opponents that republicans could not be trusted, that a hidden agenda lay behind their simplest statement. The conflict over the meaning of laïcité was a case in point. Another example was the inability or unwillingness of some textbook authors to make a distinction between morality and civic-mindedness. Being upright and a democrat came to the same thing: "the real name of self-government is morality." Similarly, it nas been pointed out that France, the republic, and the revolution were indissolubly tied together in the republican mythology. To be a good Frenchman meant that one was a good republican and a son of 1789 to boot. Many understandably found this linkage gratuitous and offensive; some withheld wholehearted allegiance to the regime because the total cost of becoming a true republican was too great.

The conservativeness of the republican stance in regard to social reform is clear. In converting social and economic problems into educational problems, republicans effectively denied the need for significant governmental intervention and placed the responsibility for improvement on the shoulders of the individual. Through education, the republic offered opportunity, not results. The socio-economic system was not restructured but it was theoretically opened up. There is an interesting paradox here. On the one hand, untrammeled individualism and self-interest were deemed inappropriate bases for political behavior. Scrupulous respect for the general welfare was expected of

the citizenry. On the other hand, in economic matters self-interest was accepted as the basic motive for action, even if its consequences should prove deleterious to segments of the community. The republican state's duty to defend the general interest stopped short of regulating the marketplace so that there would be a fairer distribution of wealth. Essentially all that the republic pledged to the poor was that it would support their efforts at self-help and give them the chance, by way of education, to become more aggressive competitors.

Finally, democratic education was a faith. The right kind of learning could bring about higher standards of public and private conduct. Of course, this optimism covered a reluctance to rely on more direct means for dealing with issues, but the talk about remaking the national soul was sincere. This faith in education was part of the general aura of confidence of the late nineteenth century. Rational man, freed from the burdens of the past and nurtured on the truths of science, was destined to unlimited improvement within the republic.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Acomb, Evelyn M. The French Laic Laws, 1879-1889. Reprint ed. New York: Octagon Books, 1967.

Barral, Pierre. Les fondateurs de la troisième république. Paris: Armand Colin, 1968.

Barthelemy, Joseph. Le gouvernement de la France. 2nd ed. Paris: Payot, 1939.

Bastid, Paul. Doctrines et institutions politiques de la seconde république. 2 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1945.

Bayet, Albert, and Albert, François. Les écrivains politiques du XIX^{e} siècle. Paris: Armand Colin, 1907.

Beau de Loménie, E. Les responsabilités des dynasties bourgeoises. Vol. 2: De Mac-Mahon à Poincaré. Paris: Denoël, 1947.

Bert, Paul. Le cléricalisme. Paris: Armand Colin, 1900.

_____. Discours de Paul Bert au banquet offert par les instituteurs de France, 18 septembre 1881. Paris: C. Murat, n.d.

_____. De l'éducation civique. Paris: Picard-Bernheim, n.d.

_____. L'Instruction civique à l'école. Paris: Picard-Bernheim, 1882.

_____. Leçons, discours et conférences. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881.

Brogan, D. W. The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940.

Brulat, Paul. Histoire populaire de Jules Ferry. Paris: Paclot, 1907.

Bruno, G. [Mme. Alfred Fouillée.] Les enfants de Marcel. Paris: Eugène Belin, 1887.

Bruno, G. [Mme. Alfred Fouillée.] Le tour de la France par deux enfants. 36th ed. Paris: Eugene Belin, 1880.

Buisson, Ferdinand. La foi laïque. 2nd ed. Paris: Hachette, 1913.

Bury, J. B. History of the Papacy in the 19th Century. Reprint ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1964.

Capéran, Louis. Histoire contemporaine de la laïcité française. 2 vols. Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1957-1960.

Chastenet, Jacques. Histoire de la troisième république. 7 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1952-1963.

Clemenceau, Georges. Discours prononcé par M. Clemenceau, à Marseille, le 28 octobre 1880. Paris: Imprimerie Schiller, 1880.

_____. Discours prononcé par M. Clemenceau au Cirque Fernando, le 25 mai 1884. Paris: Imprimerie Schiller, 1884.

Compayré, Gabriel. Eléments d'éducation civique et morale. Paris: P. Garcet, Nisius, 1880.

_____. Jean Macé et l'instruction obligatoire. Paris: Paul Delaplane, 1902.

Deschanel, Paul. Gambetta. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1920.

Dessoye, A. Jean Macé et la fondation de la Ligue de l'enseignement. Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1883.

Dietz, Jean. "Jules Ferry et les traditions republicaines." Revue politique et parlementaire, CLIX (June, 1934), 521-532; CLX (July, 1934), 100-111; (August, 1934), 297-311; (September, 1934), 495-513; CLXI (October, 1934), 122-141; (December, 1934), 492-505.

Dubreuil, Léon. Paul Bert. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1935.

Durkheim, Emile. L'Evolution pédagogique en France. 2 vols. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1938.

Duveau, Georges. Les instituteurs. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957.

L'Ecole nouvelle. 1876-1882, 1886-1890.

L'Ecole primaire. 1887-1888.

Ferry, Jules. Lettres de Jules Ferry, 1846-1893. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1914.

Fourrier, Charles. L'Enseignement français de 1789 à 1945. Paris: Institut National Pédagogique, 1965.

Freycinet, Charles de. Souvenirs, 1878-1893. 7th ed. Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1913.

Gheusi, P. B. Gambetta: Life and Letters. Translated by Violette M. Montagu. New York: D. Appleton, 1910.

Girardet, Raoul. Le nationalisme français, 1871-1914. Paris: Armand Colin, 1966.

Gontard, Maurice. L'Oeuvre scolaire de la troisième république: l'enseignement primaire en France de 1876 à 1914. Toulouse: IPN Centre régional de documentation pédagogique, n.d.

Halévy, Daniel. "Trois dîners avec Gambetta." Revue des deux mondes, (July, 1929), 67-91.

Hanotaux, Gabriel. Histoire de la France contemporaine. 4 vols. Paris: Combet [Vols. 1 and 2], Société d'Edition contemporaine [Vols. 3 and 4], 1903-1908.

Haucour, Louis de. Gouvernements et ministères de la III^{e} république française. Paris: Paul Dupont, 1893.

L'Instituteur. 1886-1887.

Israël, Alexandre. L'Ecole de la république: la grande oeuvre de Jules Ferry. Paris: Hachette, 1931.

Jacques, Léon. Les partis politiques sous la III^{e} république. Paris: Société du Recueil Sirey, 1913.

Journal officiel de la république française. 1879-1886.

La Justice. 1880-1885.

Laloi, Pierre. [Ernest Lavisse.] La première année d'instruction civique. Paris: Armand Colin, 1880.

Léaud, Alexis, and Glay, Emile. L'Ecole primaire en France. 2 vols. Paris: La Cité française, 1934.

Legrand, Louis. L'Influence du positivisme dans l'oeuvre scolaire de Jules Ferry. Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1961.

Liard, Louis. Morale et enseignement civique. Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1883.

Littré, Emile. De l'établissement de la troisième république. Paris: Aux Bureaux de la Philosophie positive, 1880.

_____. Par quelle conduite la république française peut-elle consolider le succès qu'elle a obtenu? Paris: Charavay Frères, 1879.

Macé, Jean. Discours de M. Jean Macé à la séance de clôture du 4e congrès de la Ligue de l'enseignement. Paris: Imprimerie Chaix, 1884.

_____. Les idées de Jean-François. 8 vols. Paris: Emmanuel Vauchez [Vols. 1-4], Librairie Franklin [Vols. 5-7]; Laon: Imprimerie H. Le Vasseur [Vol. 8], 1872-1876.

_____. Philosophie de poche. Paris: J. Hetzel, 1893.

_____. Projet d'établissement d'une Ligue de l'enseignement en France. Saint-Germain: Imprimerie L. Toinon, 1867.

Manuel général de l'instruction primaire. 1879.

Mayeur, Jean-Marie, et al. Histoire du peuple français: cent ans d'esprit républicain. Paris: Nouvelle Librairie de France, 1964.

Mézières, M. A. Education morale et instruction civique. Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1883.

Ozouf, Mona. L'Ecole, l'église et la république, 1871-1914. Paris: Armand Colin, 1963.

Ponteil, Felix. Les classes bourgeoises et l'avènement de la démocratie, 1815-1914. Paris: Albin Michel, 1968.

_____. Histoire de l'enseignement, 1789-1965. Paris: Sirey, 1966.

Pottecher, Maurice. Jules Ferry. 2nd ed. Paris: Gallimard, 1930.

Prost, Antoine. L'Enseignement en France, 1800-1967. Paris: Armand Colin, 1968.

Le Ralliement des instituteurs et des institutrices. 1884-1885.

Rambaud, Alfred. Jules Ferry. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1903.

Reclus, Maurice. Jules Ferry. Paris: Flammarion, 1947.

Reinach, Joseph, ed. Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta. 11 vols. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881-1885.

_____. La vie politique de Léon Gambetta. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1918.

La Revue pédagogique. 1879-1887.

Robiquet, Paul, ed. Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry. 7 vols. Paris: Armand Colin, 1893-1898.

Scott, John A. Republican Ideas and the Liberal Tradition in France, 1870-1914. Reprint ed. New York: Octagon Books, 1966.

Soltau, Roger Henry. French Political Thought in the 19th Century. Reprint ed. New York: Russell and Russell, 1959.

Spuller, Eugène. Education de la démocratie. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1892.

_____. Figures disparues. 3 vols. 3rd ed. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1894.

Stannard, Harold. Gambetta and the Foundation of the Third Republic. London: Methuen, 1921.

Steeg, Jules. Instruction morale et civique. Paris: N. Fauvé et F. Nathan, 1882.

Stewart, John Hall. A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution. New York: Macmillan, 1951.

Thibaudet, Albert. Les idées politiques de la France. Paris: Librairie Stock, Delamain et Boutelleau, 1932.

Thomson, David. Democracy in France Since 1870. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Touchard, Jean. Histoire des idées politiques. 2 vols. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959.

La Tribune des instituteurs et des institutrices. 1883-1889.

Tudesq, André-Jean. La démocratie en France depuis 1815. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971.

Wright, Gordon. France in Modern Times. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1960.

Zévaès, Alexandre. Histoire de la troisième république. Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue critique, 1938.